

THE ARGOSY.

JULY 1, 1868.

ANNE HEREFORD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

CHAPTER XV.

THE NEW COMPANION.

A SOLITARY breakfast for me. Mr. Chandos remained in his room, nursing his foot; Lady Chandos was in hers. As I was eating it, Hill came in.

"Will you transact a commission for my lady this morning, Miss Hereford?"

"With great pleasure," I answered, starting up with alacrity, glad that they were going to give me something to do at last. "What is it?"

"Well, it's nothing that you need be in such a hurry for as to lose your breakfast," grimly responded Hill. "My lady is sick, Mr. Chandos is disabled, I can't be spared; so we want you to go to Marden, and make some inquiries."

"Oh yes; I will go anywhere. It is very dull here, by myself all day. Is it about Mrs. Penn?"

"It is about Mrs. Penn," returned Hill in her stiffest manner. "You will have to see Mrs. Howard, the lady she referred to, and ask certain questions of her, which will be written down for you."

"Am I to go by train, Hill?"

"My lady would not send you alone by train. Her own carriage will be round by ten o'clock to convey you to Marden."

At ten the carriage drew up. I was quite ready for it. Vain girl! I had put on one of my prettiest dresses, and a white bonnet; my chestnut hair rippled back from my brow, and the pink flowers mingled with it. I had grown fairer than I was as a child, and my cheeks wore generally a soft bright colour.

Stepping in, I was bowled away, in the same state that my lady

would have gone. The fine chariot had its handsome hammer-cloth, its baronet's badge on the panels, its attendant servants. I was born to this social state, if I had not been brought up in it, and it was very delightful. The old lodge-keeper touched his hat to me as we passed through the gates to the smooth road. The sun was shining, the birds were singing, the leafy trees were dancing.

"Now mind!" Hill had said to me. "All you have to do is to put by word of mouth these questions written down for you, and to take strict note of the answers, so as to report them accurately when you come back. They are but ordinary questions: or else you would not be sent. Be discreet, young lady, and don't talk on your own score."

"I opened the paper and read over the questions as we went along. Simple queries, as Hill had said; just such as are put when a dependent, whether lady or servant, is being engaged. The address given was "Mrs. Charles Howard, number nine, King Street, Marden." And there the carriage drew up. Carrying the paper, I was shown up stairs to the drawing-rooms, sending in my name—"Miss Hereford."

Handsome rooms, two communicating. A lady, very much dressed in elaborate morning costume, rose to receive me. I found it was Mrs. Howard, and entered upon my queries.

They were most satisfactorily answered. A higher character than she gave to Mrs. Penn could not be tendered. Mrs. Penn was faithful, good, discreet, and trustworthy; very capable in all ways, and invaluable in a sick room. Her regret at parting with her was great, but she, Mrs. Howard, was going to Brussels on a long visit to her married daughter, and it would be inconvenient to take Mrs. Penn. She should be so glad to see her settled elsewhere comfortably, before leaving England.

So voluble was Mrs. Howard, saying ten times more than she need have said, that I could not get in a word. I should have liked her better had she been less flourishing in speech, and not worn quite so many ornaments. As soon as I could speak, I asked if I might see Mrs. Penn, such having been Hill's instructions to me, in case the references proved satisfactory.

Mrs. Howard rang for her, and she came in. She wore a bright violet gown of some soft material; her red hair was disposed in waving bands low on her forehead and taken back underneath her cap. *Had* I seen her anywhere in my past life? The expression of her full face when her eyes were turned on me seemed so familiar; striking upon the mind like something we may have seen in a dream; but when I examined her features I could not trace in them any remembrance. Perhaps I was mistaken. We do see faces that resemble others as we go through life.

So, things proving satisfactory, Mrs. Penn was desired to proceed at once by train to Chandos. And was engaged.

On the following Monday morning, as I was seated alone in the oak parlour, Mrs. Penn came in, her bonnet and shawl on. She had been out of doors.

"I don't know what your grim old butler will say to me, but I have forestalled him with the postman," she began, without any other greeting. "Unless I take a turn for ten minutes in the open air of a morning, I feel stifled for the day: the postman came up while I was in the broad walk, and I took the letters from him. Only two," she continued, regarding the addresses in a free and easy sort of manner scarcely becoming her position. "Both foreign letters," she went on in a running comment. "One is for Harry Chandos, Esquire; the other for Miss Hereford. That is yourself, I think."

"I am Miss Hereford."

"It is a pretty name," she observed, looking at me: "almost as pretty as you are. Do you remember in the school history of England we are told of the banishment of Lord Hereford by his sovereign, and how it broke his heart? Is your Christian name as pretty?"

"It is Anne."

"Anne Hereford! A nice name altogether. Where do your friends live?"

Instead of answering, I rose and rang the bell for the butler; who came in.

"The letters are here, Hickens," I said, putting the one for Mr. Chandos in his hand, while I kept mine. Hickens, with a dubious air, looked alternately at me, and the letters, as if wondering how they came there. I explained.

"Mrs. Penn brought them in. She tells me she met the postman in the broad walk, and took them from him."

"Please to let the man bring the letters to the house, ma'am, should you meet him again," Hickens respectfully observed, turning to Mrs. Penn. "My lady never allows any one to take them from the postman: he brings them into the hall, and delivers them into my hand. Miss Emily, when she was at home, once took them from the man in the grounds, and my lady was very much displeased with her. Her ladyship is exceedingly strict in the matter."

"How particular they seem about their letters!" exclaimed Mrs. Penn in an undertone, as Hickens departed with his master's.

"Many families are so. Mr. Paler was worse than this, for he always liked to take the letters from the facteur himself."

"Who is Mr. Paler?" she questioned.

"I have been living as governess in his family in Paris. Mrs. Penn, may I ask you whether I left a handkerchief at Mrs. Howard's the day I went there?"

"Not that I know of. I did not hear of it. Have you lost one?"

"Yes; one that I valued, for it was embroidered for me by a dear friend. I know I had it in the carriage in going to Marden, but I remember nothing of it subsequently. When I got home I missed it."

"You most likely dropped it in stepping out of the carriage."

"Yes; I fear so."

She quitted the room with a remark that her time was up. I opened my letter, which was in Emily de Mellissie's handwriting; and read as follows:

"The idea of your making all this fuss! Though I suppose it is mamma's fault, not yours. She is neither poison nor a tiger, and therefore will not do the house irretrievable damage. It's not my fault if Alfred has taken this gastric fever, and I am detained here. I'd rather be in the wilds of Africa, I do assure you, scampering over the sandy desert on a mad pony, than condemned to be pent up in sick-chambers. Fancy what it is! Alfred reduced to a skeleton, in his bed on alternate days, taking nothing but *tisane*, and that sort of slops, and lamenting that he won't get over it: Madame de Mellissie in *her* bed, groaning under an agonizing attack of sciatica; and I doing duty between the two. It's dreadful. I should come off to Chandos to-morrow, and leave them till they were better, but that the world would call me hard-hearted, and any other polite name it could lay its tongue to. Every second day he seems nearly as well as I am, and says I shall start for Chandos on the next. When the next comes, there he is, down again with fever. And that is my present fate!—which is quite miserable enough without your reproaching me for being thoughtless, and all the rest of it. How I should get through the dreary days but for some novels and a few callers, I don't know; but the novels are not exciting, and the visitors are stupid. Paris is empty just now, and as dull as a dungeon. Don't go worrying me with any more letters reflecting on my 'prudence,' or I shall send them back to you. If mamma orders you to write, tell her plainly that you won't. Pray who is Anne Hereford that she should be allowed to disturb the peace of Chandos? Indeed, Harry, she is *nobody*! and you need not stand on ceremony with her. I am sorry that her staying there just now should be so very inconvenient—as you hint that it is. Mamma has a great dislike to have people in the house, I know; but the leaving her was really not my fault, as you ought to see. I will be over as soon as I can, for my own sake—you cannot form an idea what it is here, no soirées going on, no anything—and relieve you of her. But if you really cannot allow her to remain until then, the shortest way will be to let her go to Nulle.

"Love to mamma, and believe me, ever your affectionate sister,

"EMILY DE MELLISSIE."

I read nearly to the end before suspecting that the letter was not meant for me. I had supposed it to be the answer to the one I despatched to Emily on the previous Friday. Some one else—as it would appear—had despatched one also, remonstrating at the inconvenience my presence caused at Chandos.

With a face that was burning in its every lineament—with hands that trembled as they closed—with a heart that felt half sick with shame—I started up. That very moment I would write word to Madame de Mellissie that I was quitting Chandos; and to Miss Barlieu, to say I was coming. In the midst of which paroxysm there entered Mr. Chandos, between Hickens and a stick.

He sat down in an arm-chair, wishing me good morning. When the man had gone I advanced to him with the open letter.

"This letter must be intended for you, I think, Mr. Chandos, although it was addressed to me. It is from Madame Alfred de Mellissie."

"Just so," he said, taking it, and handing me the one he himself held. "This I presume is for you, as it begins 'My dear Anne Hereford.' Emily has betrayed her characteristic heedlessness, in sending my letter to you, and yours to me."

He ran his eyes over the note, and then called to me. I stood looking from the window.

"Have you read this?"

"Every word. Until I came to my own name, I never suspected that it was not written for me. I am very sorry, Mr. Chandos; but I hope you will not blame me: indeed it was done inadvertently."

"So am I sorry," he answered, in a joking sort of tone, as if he would pass the matter over lightly. "Emily's letters ought to be preserved in the British Museum."

Before he could say more Hill came in, and began talking with him in an undertone, looking crossly at me. Of course it drove me away. I went to the portico, and read my letter.

"MY DEAR ANNE HEREFORD,

"You need not trouble yourself at all about being what you call 'an encumbrance' at Chandos, but just make yourself contented until I can come over. Mamma and my brother ought to be glad to have you there, for they are mured up alone from year's end to year's end. Keep out of their way as much as possible, so as not to annoy them.

"Yours sincerely,

"EMILY DE MELLISSIE.

"P.S.—Of course you might go to Miss Barlieu's, if Lady Chandos deems it expedient that you should."

A fine specimen of contradiction the note presented. I folded it

and went up stairs, one determination strong upon me—to depart for Nulle.

Mrs. Penn was standing at the corridor-window. She was dressed handsomely, this new companion : a gray silk robe, a gold chain, a pretty blonde-lace cap, mingling with her nearly scarlet hair, valuable rings on her fingers. Just as I took likes and dislikes when a child, so I took them still. And I did not like Mrs. Penn.

"I cannot divest myself of the notion that I have met you before, Mrs. Penn," I said. "But I am unable to recollect where."

"I can tell you," she answered. "You were at school at Nulle, and attended the English Protestant Church. It was there you and I used to see each other."

"There?" I repeated incredulously, thinking she must be wrong.

"Yes, there," said Mrs. Penn. "I was staying in the town for some weeks two or three years ago ; I remembered your face again here directly, though you have grown much. You were wont to study my face nearly as much as you studied your prayer-book. I used to wonder what you found in me to admire."

Throw my recollection back as I would, I could not connect the face before me with my associations of Nulle. It certainly might have been there that we met—and indeed why should she say so, were it not?—but it did not seem to be. As to the looking off the prayer-book part, I was sure that there could not have been much of that, the English governess always watched us so sharply.

"Did you know the Miss Barlieus, Mrs. Penn?"

"Only by sight ; I had no acquaintance with them. Quite old maids they are."

"They are kind, good women," I broke out indignantly, and Mrs. Penn laughed.

"Somewhat careless withal, are they not? I think that was exemplified in the matter relating to Miss Chandos."

I could not answer. The whole blame had lain with Emily, but I did not choose to say that to Mrs. Penn. She was turning her gold chain round and round her finger, and when she spoke again her voice had dropped to a low tone.

"Do you believe in ghosts, Miss Hereford?"

"Ghosts?" I echoed, astonished at the question.

"Ghosts," she repeated. "Do you believe that the dead come again?"

"When I see any ghosts I will tell you whether I believe in them or not," I said jokingly. "Up to the present time it has not been my good fortune to fall in with any."

"It is said," she proceeded, looking round with caution, "that a ghost haunts Chandos. Have you not seen any strange sights?"

"No indeed. It would very much astonish me to see such—if by 'strange sights' you mean ghosts."

"I saw one once," she said.

"Mrs. Penn!"

"A lady died in a house where I was staying; died almost suddenly. If ever I saw anything in my life, I saw her after she was in her grave. You look at me with incredulity."

"I cannot fancy that a real genuine ghost was ever seen. I am aware that strange tales are told—and believed: but I think they are but tales of the imagination."

"In speaking of strange tales do you allude to Chandos?"

"Certainly not. I spoke of the world in general."

"You take me up sharply. Nevertheless, strange tales are whispered of Chandos. On a moonlight night, as report runs, the spirit of Sir Thomas may be seen in the walks."

"Does it swim over from India to take its promenade?" I mockingly asked.

"You are thinking of the present baronet: he is not dead: I spoke of the late one. Look out some of these light nights, will you, and tell me whether you see anything. I cannot; for the available windows of the east wing do not face this way. They say he takes exercise in the pine walk."

"Did you say Sir Thomas's ghost, Mrs. Penn?" I asked laughing.

"The world says so. I hear that some of the maids here, seeing the sight, have arrived at the notion that it is only Mr. Harry Chandos given to come out of his room at night and take moonlight promenades."

There was a ball in the window-seat, and I tossed it with indifference. She had got hold of the wrong story, and it was not my place to set her right. Hill came up, saying Mr. Chandos wished to speak to me; but I did not hurry down.

I had made my mind up to borrow sufficient money of him to take me to Nulle, and was trying to call up courage to ask it. His leg was upon a rest when I went in, and he leaned back in his chair reading a newspaper.

"I want to speak to you, Miss Hereford."

"And I—wanted—to speak to you, sir, if you please," I said resolutely, in spite of my natural hesitation.

"Very well. Place aux dames. You shall have the first word."

It appeared, however, that Lizzy was to have that. She came in at the moment, asked leave to speak, and began a recital of a second visit she had paid the gipsies the previous night, in which she had accused them of having attacked Mr. Chandos. The recital was a long one and delivered curiously, very fast and in one tone, just as if she were repeating from a book, and imparting the idea that it had been learnt by heart. She wound up with saying the gipsies quitted the common in the night; and therefore no doubt could remain that one of the women had been the assailant. Mr. Chandos regarded her keenly.

"Lizzy Dene, what is your motive for pursuing these gipsies in the way you do? No one accuses them but you."

"Motive, sir?" returned the woman.

"Ay; motive," he pointedly said. "I shall begin to suspect that you know more about the matter than you would like made public. I think it is you to whom we must look for an explanation, not the gipsies."

Did you ever see a pale face turn to a glowing, fiery red?—the scarlet of confusion, if not of guilt? So turned Lizzy's, to my utter amazement, and I think to that of her master. Could *she* have had anything to do with the attack upon him? She stammered forth a few deprecatory words, that, in suspecting the gipsies, she had only been actuated by the wish to serve Mr. Chandos, and backed out of the parlour.

Backed out to find herself confronted by a tall, swarthy man, who had made his way into the hall without the ceremony of knocking for admittance. He was one of the gipsies. Lizzy Dene gave a half shriek and flew away, and the man came inside the room, fixing his piercing eyes upon those of Mr. Chandos.

"It has been told to me this morning that you and your people accuse us of having assaulted you," he began, without prelude. "Master, I have come back ten miles to set it right."

"I have not accused you," said Mr. Chandos. "The assault upon me—if it can be called such—proceeded from a woman; but I have no more cause to suspect that it was one of your women, than I have to suspect any other woman in the wide world."

"'Twas none of ours, master. We was 'camped upon your common, and you let us stop there unmolested; some lords of the soil drive us off ere we can pitch our tent, hunt us away as they'd hunt a hare. You didn't; you spoke kind to us, more than once in passing; and we'd have protected you with our own lives, any one of us, had need been. Do you believe me, master?"

The man's voice was earnest, and he raised his honest eyes, fierce though they were, to Mr. Chandos, waiting for the question to be answered.

"I do believe you."

"That's well, then, and what I came back hoping to hear. But now, master, I'll tell ye what I saw myself that same night. I was coming up toward this way, and you overtook me, riding fast. May be you noticed me, for I touched my hat."

"I remember it," said Mr. Chandos.

"You rode in at the gates at a hand gallop; I could hear the horse's hoofs in the silence of the evening. I met one of our fellows, and stopped to speak to him, which hindered me three or four minutes; and—you know them trees to the left of the gate, master, with posts afore 'em?"

"Well?" said Mr. Chandos.

"There stood a woman there when I got up. She was taking off a gray cloak, and she folded it small and put it on her arm and walked away. Folks put on cloaks at night, instead of taking 'em off, was in my thoughts, and I looked after her."

"Did you know her?"

"I never saw her afore. She was one in your condition of life, master, for her clothes were brave, and the rings glittered on her fingers. Next morning when we heard what had happened, we said she was the one. I have not seen her since. She seemed to be making for the railroad."

"Why did you not come and tell me this at the time?"

"Nay, master, was it any business of mine? How did I know I should be welcome? That's all, sir."

"Will you take some refreshment?" said Mr. Chandos. "You are welcome to it."

"Master, I don't need any."

The man, with a rude salute to me, turned and departed, and we saw him treading the gravel walk with a fearless step. Mr. Chandos turned to me with a smile.

"What do you think of all this?"

"I am sure that the gipsies are innocent."

"I have been tolerably sure of that from the first, for I knew that their interest did not lie in making an enemy of me; rather the contrary; what puzzles me, is Lizzy Dene's manner. But let us return to the matter we were interrupted in, Miss Hereford. Go on with what you were about to say."

Very shrinkingly I began, standing close to him, giving him a sketch of the circumstances (Mrs. Paler's tardy payment) that caused me to be without money; and asking him to lend me a trifle: just enough to take me back to Nulle. About a guinea, I thought, or a guinea and a half: I had a few shillings left still. Mr. Chandos seemed highly amused, smiling in the most provoking way.

"Does Mrs. Paler really owe you thirty guineas?"

"Yes, sir. It is half a year's salary."

"Then I think she ought to pay you."

"Will you lend me the trifle, sir?"

"No. Not for the purpose you name. I will lend you as much as you like to put in your pocket: but not to take you to Nulle."

"I must go, sir. At least I must go somewhere. And I only know the Miss Barlieus in all the world."

"You wish to go because, in consequence of Emily's letter, you are deeming yourself an encumbrance at Chandos?"

I made no answer in words: the colour that flushed into my cheeks was all-sufficient.

"Let me speak to you confidentially," he said, taking my hand in his; "for a few minutes we will understand each other as friends. I am grieved that Emily's carelessness should have been the cause of annoyance to you; my mother will be sadly vexed when I tell her; but you must now listen to the explanation. There are certain family reasons which render it inexpedient for a stranger to be located at Chandos; even Emily herself would not at all times be welcome. Emily left you here. As the days went on, and we heard nothing from her, my mother desired me to write and inquire when she would be over, and to reprove her thoughtlessness in leaving you at Chandos, when she knew why it was more expedient that we should be alone. I simply wrote what my mother desired me; no more; and this letter of Emily's to-day is the answer to it. Now you have the whole gist of the affair. But I must ask you fully to understand that it is not to you personally my mother has an objection; on the contrary, she likes you; the objection applies to *any* one, save its regular inmates, who may be at Chandos. Did a royal princess offer a visit here, she would be equally unwelcome. Do you understand this?"

"Quite so. But, understanding it, I can only see the more necessity for my leaving."

"And where would you go?"

"To Nulle. To the Miss Barlieu's."

"No; that would not do," he said. "Emily has left you here under our charge, and we cannot part with you, except to her. You said you must be guided by me in your reading; you must be guided by me also in this."

"I should only be too willing under happier circumstances. But you cannot imagine how uncomfortable is the feeling of knowing that I am intruding here in opposition to the wish of Lady Chandos."

"Lady Chandos does not blame you for it; be assured of that. And I can tell you my mother has other things to think of just now than of you—or Emily either. Will you try and make yourself contented?"

"You must please not say any more, Mr. Chandos. If I had nowhere else to go to, it would be a different thing; but I have Miss Barlieu's house."

"And suppose you had not that? Would you make yourself contented and stay?"

"Yes," I said, rashly.

"Then be happy from this moment. Miss Barlieu's house is a barred one to you at present."

Something like a leap of joy seemed to take my heart. His tone of truth was not to be mistaken.

"Lady Chandos had a note from Miss Annette on Saturday. Amidst other news it contained the unpleasant tidings that fever had broken

out at Nulle; one of their young ladies had been seized with it and was lying very ill; and another was sickening."

"Oh, Mr. Chandos!"

"So you see we should not allow you to go there just now. Neither would the Miss Barlieus receive you. As my mother observed, that news settled the question."

I remained silent: in my shock and perplexity.

"Fever seems to be busy this autumn," he remarked carelessly. "It is in this neighbourhood; it is in Paris; it is in Nulle: and probably in a great many more places."

"But, Mr. Chandos! What am I to do?"

"There is only one thing that you can do—or that Lady Chandos would allow you to do; and that is, stay here. Not another word, Miss Hereford. You can't help yourself, you know," he added, laughing; "and we are happy to have you."

"But the objection that Lady Chandos feels to having any one?"

"Ah well—you will not be a dangerous visitor. If the worst came to the worst, we should have to enlist you on our side, and make you take a vow of fidelity to Chandos and its interests."

He was speaking in a laughing, joking way, so that one could not tell whether his words were jest or earnest. Still they were curious ones.

"That is the situation, young lady. You can't help yourself, you see, if you would. How much money will you have?"

"Oh, sir, none. I do not require it, if I am not to go. I wish—as I am to stay here—I could make myself useful to some one."

"So you can; you can be useful to me. I will constitute you my head-nurse and walking companion. I shall use your shoulder at will until my foot has its use again. Take care I don't tire you out."

He had kept my hand in his all that while, and now he gazed directly into my eyes with those deep blue, speaking ones of his. A thrill of rapture ran through me, and I never asked myself wherefore. Could it be that I was learning to love Mr. Chandos?

I sat in the oak-parlour through the live-long day; I had nowhere else to sit but in my bedroom. Dangerous companionship!—that of an attractive man like Mr. Chandos.

Calling Hickens to his aid in the afternoon, he went slowly up to the apartments of Lady Chandos, and I saw no more of him until dinner-time. Meanwhile I wrote a long letter to Miss Annette, expressing my great sympathy with the illness amidst the schoolgirls, and begging her to write to me, and also to let me know the very instant that the house should be safe again, for that I wanted to come to it.

In the evening Mr. Chandos, his lamp at his elbow, read aloud from a volume of Tennyson. I worked. Never had poetry sounded so sweet before; never will it sound sweeter; and when I went up-stairs to bed

that melodious measure, and that still more melodious voice, yet rang in my ears.

To bed, but not to rest. What was the matter with me? I know, not, but I could not sleep. Tossing and turning from side to side; now a line of the poems would recur to me: now would rise up the face of Mr. Chandos; now the remembrance of Lady Chandos's vexation at my being there. As the clock struck one, I rose from my uneasy bed, determined to try what walking about the chamber would do. Pulling the blind aside, I paused to look out on the lovely night, its clear atmosphere and its shining stars nearly as bright as day.

Why!—was I awake? or was I dreaming? There, under shade of the thick trees, keeping close to them, as if not wishing to be seen, but all too plain to me, nevertheless, paced Mr. Chandos, wrapped in a large over-coat. What had become of his lame foot? That he walked slowly, as one does who is weak, there was no denying, but still he did not walk *lame*. Did, or would, a state of somnambulancy cause a disabled limb to recover temporary service and strength? Every sense I possessed, every reason, answered No. As I gazed at the sight, with bewildered brain and beating heart, Mrs. Penn's words flashed over me, that it was the ghost of the dead Sir Thomas which was said to haunt the groves of Chandos.

Could it be? Was I looking at a real ghost? We all know how susceptible the brain is to superstition in the lonely midnight hours, and I succumbed in that moment to an awful terror. Don't laugh at me. With a smothered cry, I flew to the bed, leaped in, and covered my face with the bedclothes.

One idea was uppermost amid the many that crowded on me. If that was indeed the spirit of Sir Thomas, he must have died a younger man than I supposed, and have borne a great likeness to his son, Harry Chandos.

The morning's bright sun dispelled all ghostly illusions. I went out of doors as soon as I got down, just for a run along the broad walk and back again. At the corner, where the angle hid the house, I came upon Mrs. Penn and the postman, only a few yards off. She had stopped him to look at the addresses of the letters he was bringing. The sight sent me back again; but not before she turned and saw me. Not only did the action appear to me dishonourable—one I could not have countenanced—but some instinct seemed to say that Mrs. Penn was unjustifiably prying into the affairs of the Chandos family.

As Hickens took the letters from the man in the hall, Mrs. Penn came into the oak-parlour. I was pouring out my coffee then.

"I am quite in despair," she exclaimed, flinging herself into a chair, with short ceremony. "These three days have I been expecting news of an invalid friend; and it does not come; I hope and trust she is not dead!"

"Perhaps she is unable to write?"

"She is. I said news of her; not from her. When I saw the postman come in at the gates just now, hope rose up within me, and I ran to meet him. But hope was false. The man brought me no letter, nothing but disappointment."

I am not sure but I must have had a wicked heart about that time. Instead of feeling sympathy with Mrs. Penn and her sick friend, a sort of doubt came over me, that she was only saying this to excuse her having stopped the postman. She untied the strings of her black lace bonnet, and rose, saying she supposed breakfast would be ready by the time she got up stairs.

"Mrs. Penn," I interposed, taking a sudden resolution to speak, "was that a joke of yours yesterday, about Sir Thomas Chandos?"

"About his ghost, do you mean? It was certainly not my joke. Why?"

"Nothing. I have been thinking about it."

"I don't tell you the ghost comes; but I should watch if I had the opportunity. The shutters in the front of the east wing are unfortunately fastened down with iron staples. I conclude—I *conclude*," repeated Mrs. Penn, slowly and thoughtfully—"as a precaution against the looking out of Mrs. Chandos."

"I dare say it is the greatest nonsense in the world. A ghost! People have grown wise now."

"I dare say it may be nonsense," she rejoined. "But for one thing I should heartily say it is nothing else."

"And that one thing, Mrs. Penn?"

"I will not disclose it to you, Anne Hereford. The report is common enough in the neighbourhood. Inquire of any of the petty shopkeepers in the hamlet, and you will find it to be so. They will tell you that rumours have been afloat for a long while that Sir Thomas may be seen at night in the pine walk."

She quitted the room as she spoke, leaving on my mind a stronger impression than ever that I had met her somewhere in my lifetime, had talked with her, and she with me. There was in her manner an unconscious familiarity rarely indulged in save from old acquaintanceship. It was strange that she and Mr. Chandos should both strike on chords of my memory. Chords that would not be traced.

They were fortunate in this new companion. Gathering a word from one and another, I heard she was thoroughly efficient. And they made much of her, treating her essentially as a lady. She went out in the carriage with Mrs. Chandos; she talked to Mr. Chandos as an equal; she patronized me. But a whisper floated through the house that the only one who did not take kindly to her was Mrs. Chandos.

CHAPTER XVI.

TELEGRAPHING FOR A PHYSICIAN.

SOME uncomfortable days passed on. Uncomfortable in one sense. Heaven knows I was happy enough, for the society of Mr. Chandos had become all too dear, and in it I was basking away the golden hours. Looking back now, I cannot sufficiently blame myself. Not for staying at Chandos; I could not help that; but for allowing my heart to yield unresistingly to the love. How could I suppose it would end? Alas! that was what I never so much as thought of: the present was becoming too much of an Elysium for me to look questioningly beyond it; it was as a very haven of sweet and happy rest.

With some of the other inmates, things seemed to be anything but easy. Lady Chandos was still invisible; and, by what I could gather, growing daily worse. Mr. Chandos, his lameness better, looked bowed down with a weight of apprehensive care. Hill was in a state of fume and fret; and the women servants, meeting in odd corners, spoke whisperingly of the figure that nightly haunted Chandos.

What astonished me more than anything was, that no medical man was called in to Lady Chandos. Quite unintentionally, without being able to help myself, I overheard a few words spoken between Hill and Mr. Chandos. That Lady Chandos was dangerously ill, and medical aid an absolute necessity, appeared indisputable; and yet it seemed they did not dare to summons it. It was a riddle unfathomable. The surgeon came still to Mr. Chandos every day. What would have been easier than for him to go up to Lady Chandos? He never did, however; he was not asked to do so. Day after day he would say, "How is Lady Chandos?" and Mr. Chandos's reply would be, "Much the same."

The omission struck also on Mrs. Penn. One day, when she had come into my chamber uninvited, she spoke of it abruptly, looking full in my face, in her keen way.

"How is it they don't have a doctor to her?"

"What is the use of asking me, Mrs. Penn? I cannot tell why they don't."

"Do you never hear Mr. Chandos say why?"

"Never. At the beginning of her illness, he said his mother knew how to treat herself, and that she had a dislike to doctors."

"There's more in it than that, I think," returned Mrs. Penn. "That surly Hill won't answer a single question. All I get out of her is, 'My lady's no better.' Mrs. Chandos goes into the west wing most days, but she is as close as Hill. The fact is—it is very unfortunate, but Mrs. Chandos appears to have taken a dislike to me."

"Taken a dislike to you?"

Mrs. Penn nodded. "And not a word upon any subject, save the merest conversational trifles, will she speak. But I have my own opinion of Lady Chandos's illness: if I am right, their reticence is accounted for. I think the malady is not bodily, but mental; and that they, in consequence, keep her in seclusion. Poor woman! She has had enough trouble to drive her mad."

"Oh, Mrs. Penn! Mad!"

"I mean what I say."

"But did you not have an interview with her when you came?"

"Yes, a short one. Harry Chandos was sitting with her, and went out, after a few words to me, staying in the next room. It seemed to me that she was impatient to have him back again: any way, she cut the meeting very short. I am bound to say that she appeared collected then."

Mrs. Penn lifted her hand, glittering with rings, to her brow as she spoke, and pushed slightly back her glowing hair. Her face looked troubled—that kind of trouble that arises from perplexity.

"Allowing it to be as you fancy, Mrs. Penn, they would surely have a doctor to her. Any medical man, if requested, would keep the secret."

"Ah! it's not altogether that, I expect," returned Mrs. Penn, in a tone of significance. "You would keep it, and I would keep it, as inmates of the family; and yet you see how jealously we are excluded. I suspect the true motive is, that they dare not risk the revelations she might make."

"What revelations?"

"You do not, perhaps, know it, Miss Hereford, but there is a sword hanging over the Chandos family," she continued, dropping her voice to a whisper. "An awful sword. It is suspended by a hair; and a chance word of betrayal might cause it to fall. Of that chance word the Chandoses live in dread. Lady Chandos, if she be really insane, might drop it."

"Over which of them?" I exclaimed, in dismay.

"I had rather not tell you which. It lies over them all, so to say. It is that, beyond question, which keeps Sir Thomas in India: when the blow comes, he can battle with it better there than at home. They lie under enough disgrace as it is: they will lie under far greater then."

"They appear to be just those quiet, unpretending, honourable people who could not invoke disgrace. They—surely you cannot be alluding to Miss Chandos's runaway marriage!" I broke off, as the thought occurred to me.

"Tush! Runaway marriages are as good as others for what I see," avowed Mrs. Penn, with careless creed. "I question if Miss Chandos even knows of the blow that fell on them. I tell you, child, it was a fearful one. It killed old Sir Thomas; it must be slowly killing Lady

Chandos. Do you not observe how they seclude themselves from the world?"

"They might have plenty of visitors if they chose."

"They *don't* have them. Any one in the secret would wonder if they did. Looking back, there's the disgrace that has fallen; looking forward, there's the terrible blow that has yet to fall."

"What is the nature of the disgrace?—what is the blow?"

Mrs. Penn shook her head resolutely. "I am unable to tell you, for two reasons. It is not my place to reveal private troubles of the family sheltering me; and its details would not be meet for a young lady's ears. Ill doings generally leave their consequences behind them—as they have here. Harry Chandos——"

"There is no ill-doing attaching to *him*," I interrupted, a great deal too eagerly.

A smile of derision parted the lips of Mrs. Penn. I saw that it must be one of two things—Harry Chandos was not a good man, or else Mrs. Penn disliked him.

"You don't know," she said. "And if you did, Harry Chandos can be nothing to you."

Her light eyes were turned on me with a searching look, and my cheeks went into a red heat. Mrs. Penn gathered her conclusions.

"Child," she impressively said, "if you are acquiring any liking for Harry Chandos, *dis-acquire* it. Put the thought of him far from you. That he may be a pleasant man in intercourse, I grant; but he must not become too pleasant to you, or to any other woman. Never waste your heart on a man who cannot marry."

"Cannot *he* marry?"

"No. But I am saying more than I ought," she suddenly added. "We get led on unconsciously in talking, and one word brings out another."

I could have boxed her ears in my vexation. Never, never had the idea of marrying Mr. Chandos crossed my mind; no, not in the wildest dream of dreams. I was a poor dependent governess; he was the presumptive heir to Sir Thomas Chandos.

"To return to what I was saying of Lady Chandos," resumed Mrs. Penn. "Rely upon it, I am right: that she has been suddenly afflicted with insanity. There is no other way of accounting for the mystery attaching to that west wing."

I sat down to think when she left me. To think. Could it possibly be true, her theory?—were there sufficient apparent grounds for it? My poor brain—bewildered with the strange events passing around on the surface or beneath the surface, this new supposition one of the strangest—was unable to decide.

Had somebody come in to say I'd had a fortune left me, I could not have been more surprised than when Hill appeared with a gracious face.

Lady Chandos's carriage was going into Marden on an errand—would I like the drive there and back? It might be a change for me.

"You dear, good Hill!" I cried, in my delight. "I'll never call you cross again."

"Then just please to put your things on at once, and leave off talking nonsense, Miss Hereford," was Hill's reproof.

Again, as before, it was a lovely day, and altogether the greatest treat they could have given me. I liked the drive, and I liked the state it was taken in. A magnificent carriage and horses, powdered servants, and one pretty girl seated inside. Which was ME!

It was a good opportunity to inquire after my lost handkerchief, and I told James to stop at Mrs. Howard's. I might have dropped it there, and it had no mark. One of the French girls had embroidered it for me as a keepsake, so I valued it. Besides, I only possessed two handkerchiefs in the world—that and another.

But the answer, when we got there, was not satisfactory. Mrs. Howard was gone. "On the Continent," they believed.

"When will she be back?" I asked, leaning from the carriage to speak.

The servant girl, rather a dirty one, and slip-shod, did not know. Not at all, she thought. Mrs. Howard had left for good.

"But does Mrs. Howard not live here? Is not this her house?"

"No, ma'am. She lodged here for a little while; that was all."

I don't know why the information struck on my mind as curious, but it did so. Why should she have been there one day, as it were, and be gone the next? It might be all right, however, and I fanciful. Mrs. Penn had said—Mrs. Howard herself had said—she was going to visit her daughter in Brussels. Only I had thought she lived in that house at Marden.

That evening I found I had to dine alone. Mr. Chandos was rather poorly, not able to eat any dinner, Hickens said. How solitary it was to me, nobody knows.

Afterwards, when I was sitting at the window in the dusk, he came down stairs. He had been in the west wing nearly all day. Opening his desk, he took out a bundle of letters: which appeared to be what he had come for.

"You must feel lonely, Miss Hereford?"

"A little, sir."

"That 'sir'!" he said, with a smile. "I am sorry not to be able to be down here with you. When I get better, we will have our pleasant times again."

I was standing up by the table. He held out his hand to shake mine. Thin and shadowy he always looked, but his face wore a gray hue in the dusk of the room.

"I fear you are very ill, sir. Suppose it should be the fever?"

"It is not the fever."

"But how can you tell it is not?"

"Do not alarm yourself. It is nothing but—but what I have had before. Good night, and take care of yourself."

His tone was strangely sad, his spirits were evidently depressed, and a foreboding of ill fell upon me. It was not lessened when I heard that a bed was made up for him in the west wing, that Lady Chandos and Hill might be within call in the night in case of need.

Therefore, when consternation broke over the house next morning, I was half prepared for it. Mr. Chandos was alarmingly ill, and a telegraphic express had gone up at dawn for a London physician.

It was so sudden, so unexpected, that none of the household seemed able to comprehend it. As to Hill, she bustled about like one demented. A large table was placed at the west-wing door, and things likely to be wanted in the sick-room were carried up and put there, ready to her hand.

The physician, a Dr. Amos, arrived in the afternoon, the carriage having been sent to await him at the terminus. A slight-made man, dressed in black, with a Roman nose, and glasses resting on it. Hickens marshalled him to the door of the west wing, where Hill received him.

He stayed a long while; but they said he was taking refreshments as well as seeing his patient. The servants all liked Mr. Chandos, and they stood peeping in doorways, anxious for the doctor to come out. Hill came down and caught them, a jug in her hand.

"Hill, do wait a moment and tell me!" I cried, as they flew away.

"Does he find Mr. Chandos dangerously ill?"

"There's a change for the better," she answered. "Mr. Chandos will be about again to-morrow or next day. For goodness' sake don't keep me with questions now, Miss Hereford!"

Not I. I did not care to keep her after that good news; and I ran away as light as a bird.

The carriage drew up to the portico, and Dr. Amos came down to it, attended by Hickens and Hill. After he passed the parlour-door, I looked out of it, and saw Mr. Dexter come up. He had heard the news of Mr. Chandos's illness, and had come to inquire after him. Seeing the gentleman, who carried physician in his every look, about to step into the carriage, Mr. Dexter had no difficulty in divining who he was. Raising his hat, he accosted him.

"I hope, sir, you have not found Mr. Harry Chandos seriously ill?"

"Mr. Harry Chandos is very ill indeed!—very ill!" replied Dr. Amos, who appeared to be a pleasant man. "I fear there are but faint hopes of him."

"Good heavens!" cried the thunderstruck agent when he was able to speak. "But faint hopes? How awfully sudden it must have come on!"

"Sudden? Not at all. It has been coming on for some time. He

may have grown worse rapidly, if you mean that. In saying but faint hopes, I mean, of course, of his eventual recovery. He'll not be quite laid by yet."

Dr. Amos entered the carriage with the last words, and it drove away, leaving his hearers to digest them; leaving me, I know, with a mist before my eyes and pulses that had ceased to beat. Hill's sharp tones broke the silence, bearing harshly upon Mr. Dexter.

"What on earth need *you* have interfered for? Can't a doctor come and go from a place but he must be smothered with questions? If you have got anything to ask, you can ask me."

"Why, Mrs. Hill, what do you mean?" remonstrated the agent. "I intended no harm, and I have done no harm. But what a pitiable thing about Mr. Chandos!"

"Doctors are not oracles always," snapped Hill. "My opinion's as good as his, and I know Mr. Chandos *will* get better: there's every chance that he'll be about to-morrow. The bad symptoms seem to be going off as sudden as they came on."

"Hill," I whispered, laying hold of her gown as she was flouncing past me, "you say he may be about to-morrow; but will he get well eventually?"

"That's another affair," answered Hill.

"Dr. Amos said it had been coming on a long while," I pursued, detaining her still. "What complaint is it?"

"It's just a complaint that you had better not ask about, for your curiosity can't be satisfied, Miss Hereford," was Hill's response, as she broke away.

Broke away, leaving me. In my dreadful uncertainty, I went up to Hickens, who was standing still, looking so sad, and asked him to tell me what was the matter with Mr. Chandos.

"I don't know any more than you, miss. Mr. Chandos has had a vast deal of grief and trouble, and it may be telling upon him. He has looked ill of late."

No comfort anywhere—no comfort. How I got through the day I don't know. It seemed as if I had received my death-knell, instead of he his.

Hill's opinion, in one respect, proved to be a correct one, for the next day Mr. Chandos appeared to the household. He came down about twelve o'clock, looking pale and subdued—but so he often looked—and I must say I could not detect much change in him. Starting from my seat in the oak-parlour, as he entered it, I went up to him in the impulse of the moment. He took both my hands.

"Glad to see me again?"

"Yes, I am glad," I whispered, calming down my excitement, and swallowing the intrusive tears that had risen. "Mr. Chandos, are you so very ill?"

"Who has been telling you that I am?" he inquired, walking to an arm-chair by help of my shoulder, for his ankle was weak yet, but not releasing me when he had sat down in it.

"I heard Dr. Amos say so. He said——"

"What did he say? Why do you stop?"

I could not answer. I could not disclose the opinion I had heard.

"I suppose you were within hearing when the doctor said he had but faint hopes of me?"

"Yes, I was. But, Mr. Chandos, who could have told you that Dr. Amos said it?"

"I was told," he smiled. "All are not so cautious as you, my little maid."

"But I hope it is not true. I hope you will get well."

"Would it give you any concern if I did not?"

My face flushed as I stood before him. Instead of answering, I bent it like a culprit—like a simpleton.

"I may cheat the doctors yet," he said, cheerfully.

"Have you been ill long?"

"I have not been quite well. Anxiety of mind sometimes takes its revenge upon the body."

He moved away to his desk as he spoke, which stood on a side-table. It was quite evident he did not wish to pursue the topic. What could I do but let it drop? Taking up my work, I carried it to the window, while he stood rummaging the desk, evidently searching for something. Every individual thing was at length turned out of it and put back again.

"Well, it's very strange!"

"What is it, sir?" That sir! as he would say. But I felt too shy, in my new and all-conscious feeling for him, to discard it entirely.

He had missed his note-book. One he was in the habit of using for any purpose; as a sort of diary, and also to enter business matters. That he had locked it up in his desk when he last wrote in it, two days ago, he felt absolutely certain.

"Have you left your keys about, sir?"

"I don't know. I generally put them in my pocket. But if I did leave them about, nobody would use them. Our servants are honest."

The book, however, could not be found. Mr. Chandos looked for it, I looked, the servants looked. He said in a joking sort of manner that some sleight-of-hand must have been at work; and sat down to write a letter. I saw its address; London, Henry Amos, M.D.

While making tea for Mr. Chandos, in the evening, a discussion arose about the date of Emily's last letter, and I ran to my room to get it. Just within the door I encountered Lizzy Dene, darting out with a haste that nearly knocked me down.

"What did you want in my room, Lizzy?"

She murmured some incoherent answer about taking the housemaid's place that evening. A lame excuse. All work connected with the chambers had to be done by daylight; it was a rule of the house. I had had doubts, vague and indefinable, of Lizzy Dene for some days—that the girl was not altogether what she seemed. She looked red and confused now.

Emily's letter was not to be found. And yet I knew that I had tied it up with two or three others and left the packet in a certain compartment of my smaller trunk. Both boxes looked as though they had been searched over, for the things were not as I placed them. But I missed nothing, except the letters. Lizzy was in the gallery now, peering out at the window close by; I called to her to come in, and bade her shut the door.

"Boxes opened! Letters gone!" she retorted, in a passionate tone—though I had only mentioned the fact. "I have never laid a finger on anything belonging to you, miss. It's come to a pretty pass if I am to be suspected of that."

"Will you tell me what you were doing in my room, Lizzy?"

"No I won't." Doggedly.

"I insist upon knowing, or I shall call Mrs. Hill."

"Well then, I *will* tell; I can't be hung for it," she returned, with sudden resolution. "I came into your room, miss, to look for something in the grounds that I thought might come there."

"The ghost?" I said, incautiously.

"So *you* know of it, miss!" was her answer. "Yes; it is walking again: and I'm veering round to their way of thought. Mrs. Hill has locked up the turret, so that look-out is barred to us."

She pulled open the door with a jerk, and departed. The draught of air blew out my frail wax-taper, and I went to the window. I had no fear; it never occurred to me that there could be anything to see. But superstition is catching, and—what did my eyes rest upon?

In the old spot, hovering about the entrance to the pine-walk, was a man's shadowy figure; the one I had been told to believe was looked upon as the ghost of Sir Thomas Chandos.

These things can be laughed at in the open day, in the broad sunshine. We are ready then to brave ghosts, to acknowledge them to be myths of the fancy as indisputably as we know the bogies of children to be puppets dressed up to frighten them; but all alone in the darkness the case is different. I was by myself on that vast floor, Lizzy Dene had gone down, the wing-doors were shut, silence reigned. Once more terror got the better of me, the pacing figure was all too shadowy, and down stairs I flew, crossed the lighted hall, and burst into the oak-parlour to Mr. Chandos.

"Have you been waiting to re-write the letter?" he asked. "Obvious that your tea stood here, getting cold!"

I could make no answer just yet, but sank into my seat with a white face.

"You look as though you had seen a ghost," he jestingly said.

And then I burst into tears, just for a moment; the effect no doubt of nervous excitement. Mr. Chandos rose at once, his manner changing to one of tender kindness.

"Has anything alarmed you?"

"I cannot find Madame de Melissie's letter," was all I answered, feeling vexed with myself.

"But that is not the cause of *this*. Something has frightened you. Come, Miss Hereford; I must know what it is," he concluded, with that quiet command of manner so few resist.

I did not: perhaps did not care to: and told him briefly what had occurred. Not mentioning suspicions of Lizzy Dene or what she said; but simply that the woman had opened the door too hastily, thereby putting my candle out—and then on to what I had seen.

"It must have been one of the gardeners," he quietly observed. "Why should that have alarmed you?"

That the gardeners never remained in the gardens after twilight, obeying the strict orders of the house, I knew. "Not a gardener," I answered, "but a ghost." And, taking courage, I told him all I had heard—that a ghost was said to walk nightly in the grounds.

"Whose ghost?" he asked, with angry sharpness.

"Your late father's, sir; Sir Thomas Chandos."

He turned quickly to the mantel-piece, put his elbow on it, and stood there with his back to me. But that his face had looked so troubled, I might have thought he did it to indulge in a quiet laugh.

"Miss Hereford, you cannot seriously believe in such nonsense!"

"No, indeed; not in collected moments; but I was left alone in the dark, and the surprise at seeing some one changed to fright."

"May I inquire from whom you heard this fine tale?"

"From Mrs. Penn first. But the women-servants talk of it. Lizzy Dene confessed she had gone up now to watch for it."

He turned round quickly. "What do you say? Lizzy Dene went up to watch for it?"

"I was not pleased at finding Lizzy in my room; she has no business to call her there, and I insisted upon knowing what took her to it. At first she would not say, but presently confessed, she had gone to watch for the ghost."

If ever a man's countenance betrayed a sickly dread, Mr. Chandos's did then. He went to the door, hesitated, and came back again, as if scarcely knowing what to be about.

"And she saw it?—saw some one walking there? She—and you?"

"I don't think she did; I saw it after she had gone. Oh, Mr. Chandos; I can see you are angry with me! I am very sorry; I——"

"Angry? no," he interrupted in a gentle tone. "I only think how foolish you must be to listen to anything of the sort. I wish I could have shielded you from this alarm! I wish you had not come just now to Chandos!"

He rang the bell; a loud peal; and desired that Hill should be sent to him. I had never seen his face so stern as when he turned it upon her.

"Can you not contrive to keep the women-servants to their proper occupations, Hill? I hear they are going about the house looking after ghosts."

"Sir! Mr. Harry!"

"Miss Hereford went to her room just now and found Lizzy Dene at its window. The woman said she was watching for the ghost."

Hill's face presented a picture. She stood more like a petrefaction than a living woman. Mr. Chandos recalled her to herself.

"Hill!" was all he said.

"I'll see about it, sir. I'll give that Lizzy Dene a word of a sort."

"I think you had better give her no 'word' at all, in the sense you indicate," returned Mr. Chandos. "Keep the women to their duties below at night, and say nothing. *Let the ghost die out, Hill.*"

"Very well, sir."

"As I dare say it will do, quietly enough. Sit with them yourself, if necessary. And—Hill—there's no necessity to mention anything of this to Lady Chandos."

"But—Mr. Harry——"

"Yes, yes; I know what you would say," he interrupted; "leave that to me."

He went limping out at the hall-door as he spoke. Hill disappeared in the direction of the kitchens, muttering angrily.

"That beast of a Lizzy Dene! If she should get spreading this among the out-door men! I always said that girl brought no good to Chandos."

(To be continued.)



A WELCOME TO SUMMER.

THE Summer has come ! oh, the Summer has come !
 The roses are blooming, the honey-bees hum ;
 I hear the birds sing,
 And I see a bright wing
 Flash down by my window where trumpet vines cling :
 I see the bird sipping the bright dew which fell
 Last night in the cup of each scarlet-hued bell.
 He gives me a glance of his saucy black eye,
 As if he would ask, " Don't you wish you could fly ?"

The Summer is here ! oh, the Summer is here !
 Full-freighted with beauty, the Queen of the year.
 And all her gay band
 With bountiful hand
 Fling flowers and foliage over the land.
 The knobby old orchard's a forest of bloom ;
 Its perfume comes wafting and fills all the room.
 And the crooked, brown apple-boughs joyously sway
 Broad arms of welcome, embracing the day.

The meadows are shining with jewels and gems—
 Quivering blossoms on tremulous stems.
 The bright cups swing,
 And the tiny bells ring,
 Welcome to Summer in everything !
 Welcome her, welcome her, flowers and trees !
 Welcome her, welcome her, streamlet and breeze !
 Warble, ye woodland birds—honey-bees, hum !
 Summer is here at last—Summer has come !

MADAME RÉCAMIER.

THERE are few things more perplexing and uncomfortable to the student of art, as he wanders through some richly-stored, but old-fashioned picture-gallery, than the bad light in which many objects most worthy of note are usually placed. Here a dusky shadow falls like a widow's veil upon the golden head of a laughing beauty; there every part of some princely, but very common-place mortal (on whom Vandyke has conferred immortality), from the gilded spur on his heel to the collar of his velvet doublet, is distinctly visible, while his face remains a blank to us; there a battle-piece, hung several feet above our heads, seems to our strained eyes, as we wearily gaze upwards, to be but a confused mass of horses, men, cannon, and smoke, suggesting to our bewildered fancy the idea that the painter must have fixed on his canvas the images of a fantastic, feverish dream. Now, we English are very much inclined to place the great men and women of other nations in an historical picture-gallery of this description. It may be that we have in our own Pantheon a few types of genius and goodness which are so grand that they make us difficult to please. It may be that national prejudices have made the atmosphere inhaled by our mind as misty as the atmosphere inhaled by our own lungs. But so it is that there are a certain number of celebrated personages belonging to foreign countries whom it is very hard to induce British eyes to look at with even tolerable fairness. From many instances which we have in our mind, we will select the woman whose name stands at the head of this paper. Not a few educated English people regard Madame Récamier as merely an admirably trained coquette, who had just brains enough to teach her how to keep her numerous lovers from ever touching her heart with more than the tips of their fingers, and how to make the most of her personal attractions. Let us, however, resolutely turn away our gaze for a few minutes from the Lucy Hutchinson and Lady Russell type of woman, which is so essentially English. Let us remember that, though this is a very pure and lofty type, there are, nevertheless, other charming ideals of female excellence. Let us struggle out of the fog of prejudice into the light of tolerant justice. Then we shall find in Madame Récamier much to admire, much to love, and much to pity.

Juliette Bernard (we will omit the other three or four long names which were given her at baptism, and call her, as did her intimate friends, by the sweet, consecrated name of Juliette) sprang from a middle-class

Parisian family, whose daughters were neither bound to serve in the pretty drill, in which homage and play were so charmingly mingled, that surrounded the queens of France: nor to sit up night after night embroidering mantles for some Court pageant. Thus it came to pass that the leading men and women, both of the aristocracy and the people, met in the drawing-room of her mother, Madame Bernard, who was a handsome, vivacious blonde, on neutral ground, and expressed their opinions with much greater freedom there than in more exclusive circles. This position was in a certain measure kept by Madame Récamier throughout her whole life. When Napoleon banished her from Paris, it was not, in reality, that he feared her as a partizan of the Bourbons, but that he resented the coldness with which she received his admiration, and her friendship for Madame de Staël. In later days she went from mixing freely among the closest adherents of Louis Philippe to lay on her breast the drooping head of Queen Hortense. France, during the time of which we are just now speaking and which comprehends the first twelve or fourteen years of Madame Récamier's life, reminds us, as we look back at it, of a volcanic mountain, with a bright garden on its summit. In the garden we see the queen and her ladies tripping about, playing now at dairy work, now at keeping shop, now at theatricals; and we see the king looking at affairs of state through spectacles which his ministers hold up before his eyes. Inside the mountain we hear a continuous roar which, however, never seems to be audible to those on the summit. That roar, which began long ago, when the hands of Madame de Maintenon and her Jesuit confessor forged at once the chain of excessive taxation to bind the arms of an already heavily shackled peasantry, and the iron scourge of persecution to drive from France the most industrious and enterprising of her commercial sons. That roar, which grew ominously loud around the scaffold, where the words of faith and love that poured from the lips of the last Huguenot martyr were drowned by a brutal soldiery (the licensed blood-hounds of arbitrary power), amid the din of trumpet and kettle-drum: that roar which was so soon to change into the wild upheaving, the fiery vomiting, and the hideous animation of the active volcano.

Juliette's education was carried on much more in the saloon and on the boulevard than in the schoolroom. Madame Bernard loved her only child too well to let her be often absent from her side; but at the same time she was too devoted to society and admiration to spend many hours in instructing her daughter. Juliette learnt to converse almost before she learnt to read, and to know what colours were becoming to her, before she knew the names of the European capitals. As she played near the embroidery-frame around which congregated the friends and admirers of her mother, she must often have heard things spoken of that sounded very marvellous to the ears of a child. She may have listened to that strange story which told how a certain very tall lady,

who went about the Court with ample hoop and fan, was in reality no lady at all, but an unfortunate gentleman, for whom offended royalty had invented this singular punishment. She may have heard discussed portions of that yet stranger drama of the diamond necklace, in which magic, intrigue, and love seemed to the lookers-on of that day to be so inextricably entangled together. As she sat on a summer afternoon in the shady boulevard at her mother's side, she may have observed one of the haughtiest ladies of the Court descend from her carriage to kiss humbly the hand of a slovenly-dressed man with a swarthy face; and when the child turned wonderingly to ask the meaning of this homage, she would be told that this was Cagliostro, the great magician, who could make gold and read the future. She may have seen Marie Antoinette and the Princesse de Lamballe returning home from the chase; the one shining like the sunbeam, the other like the pensive moonlight of beauty. Perchance she may have watched two men as they met take off their hats and bow stiffly without saying a word; one with a mischievous smile upon his lips, as though he were amused with the situation, the other with an air of dreamy apathy, and would learn that these were Beaumarchais and Glück, the two rival musical composers. As the summer twilight fell, she may have noticed a man with gracious power in his face walking slowly along, and looking about him like a stranger: and have heard that this was an Englishman who was much distinguished by her Majesty, and that his name was Edmund Burke. This brief view of Juliette's childhood may in some degree account to us for her after-success in social life. At length, when the girl was just beginning to glide from the child into the woman, the storm of revolution burst over France.

It is not our intention, in a short paper like the present, to dwell upon that terrible, but often-written page of the world's history. We all know how the tumbrils rattled over the pavements, and the mob howled and shouted round them; how women that had once been celebrated in brilliant saloons for their jewels now proved in the prison that they had something in them which could shine brighter than the diamond's flash; how the Carmagnole whirled through the streets its repulsive mixture of the picturesque, the hideous, and the grotesque. The prince of our living novelists has told to us all this in one of his most beautiful and touching tales; told us it in language in which every word fits into its place, like the particles of stone in some exquisite fragment of old Roman mosaic. We have also all stood, in fancy, beside Marie Antoinette at her trial; have bowed the knee reverently before the pale, but dignified prisoner in the soiled, faded dress: though we may have refused to bow before the adored and radiant queen, floating in shimmering satin and lustrous gems down the halls of Versailles.

In the midst of these days of the Revolution, we come to a very important event in Juliette's life, and this was her marriage with M. Ré-

camier. Now, concerning this marriage very strange things have been whispered, of which we can neither confirm the truth nor yet omit the mention. Juliette was a girl of fifteen, and M. Récamier was a middle-aged man. It is said by some that in his early manhood there had existed a very tender liaison between M. Récamier and Madame Bernard, and that in causing the marriage ceremony to be performed between himself and Juliette he was merely taking a father's best precaution to protect his beautiful young daughter in those days of lawless licence. Be this as it may (and we cannot undertake to decide the question), it is certain that M. Récamier never assumed, for a single day, a husband's position with regard to his wife; and yet that, nevertheless, she continued for many years to live under his roof, and he to treat her with kindness, and, in some sort, with affection. It is also certain that though Madame Récamier was constantly surrounded by admirers, and even by lovers, her husband never evinced the slightest shadow of jealousy; we, however, firmly believe that Madame Récamier never forgot what was due to her honour; and the thought of the lonely life which this woman (at once matron and maiden) must in reality have lived in the midst of the crowd who flattered and worshipped her, has in it, to our minds, something inexpressibly touching. Madame Récamier and her family lived unharmed through the days of the Revolution, though, doubtless, the horrors of the time made a strong impression upon the young girl's mind. It was, perhaps, the peculiar style of her charms that has rendered the beauty of Madame Récamier so famous. Her complexion was as bright and as variable as that of the Norsk maiden who wanders through the pinewood, and whose cheek is as changeful as her sky; while her lustrous black hair might have fluttered, and her dark eye might have shone in an Eastern seraglio. There was also a singularly responsive sympathy in her whole face when you spoke to her, and a peculiar silent harmony in all her movements. Add to all this a remarkably sweet temper, a kindness of nature and a desire to please, that made her stroke and feed the half-starved dogs that ran about the street; a tact that never omitted to say the right thing exactly in the right place; and we can hardly wonder that Madame Récamier carried about with her a spell which, like the golden lance of Britomart of old, prostrated all men before her.

M. Récamier exercised very little influence on his wife's destiny; he was a complete type of the Parisian gentleman of that day; a man not above one-tenth part of whose life was spent at home; a man of remarkable conversation, but most unremarkable actions; a man of easy temper and easier moral code. In the muster-roll of Madame Récamier's adorers we find almost all the great names of that day in France. Lucien Bonaparte, in a composition which he entitled "Letters of Romeo to Juliette," poured forth his passion in long, complicated sentences, which, however, are sometimes not wanting in the melody of

true feeling. Benjamin Constan, that eccentric literary meteor, glowed with a fire that was kindled at her eyes. The blood of the Montmorency bounded through his veins at the sound of her footstep more swiftly than the blood of his ancestors had bounded at the battle-cry. The grave and learned De la Harpe went the way of all the rest. Napoleon himself (who, the first time he beheld her at a public assembly, is said to have been offended by her attracting more attention than himself) seems afterwards at one period to have been quite ready to put on her livery. In judging all these things, we must take into consideration the great freedom of Continental manners in those days, and the difference between French and English sentiment; a difference which is as complete as that between a Highland lad scudding over the heather in search of his sheep and a shepherd in Dresden china. Madame Récamier's immediate and decided rejection of a place in the household of one of Napoleon's sisters, as well as every advance made towards her by the man who was so rapidly mounting up to the throne of France, shows a considerable degree of firmness and courage, and also proves to us that, when it pleased her, she could make herself disliked. Her friendship with Madame de Staël is, perhaps, the most charming part of Madame Récamier's story. The naïve admiration of the two women, the one for her friend's genius, the other for her friend's beauty; the poetic tenderness of their correspondence; their strong mutual devotion, in the face of the wrath of Napoleon; all this forms, we think, one of the most beautiful episodes in the history of woman. He was, in truth, a lucky man who once sat at dinner between these two ladies; although when he grew somewhat elevated with champagne and his exalted situation, and, becoming complimentary, declared that he was sitting between wit and beauty, Madame De Staël put an extinguisher upon him by replying, "Yes, without having either the one or the other."

For a short time the friends lived peacefully together. But very soon Napoleon (thinking that since Madame de Staël's brains were not on his side, they were probably employed against him), exiled her from France; and a little time after, finding that Madame Récamier still kept up an intercourse with her friend, banished her also to the country, forbidding her to come within so many leagues of Paris. To be forced always to reside even at twenty miles' distance from the capital would have been to both ladies very much what a banishment to Gaul was to a dame of ancient Rome. We may therefore imagine something of their disgust and indignation. Madame de Staël consoled herself with Corinne in Switzerland, and with making Schiller laugh and yawn by turns; Madame Récamier by playing the organ in a little country church, and by getting up a decorous flirtation with the Bishop of Lyons, who was a genial man and an eloquent preacher. During a subsequent visit which Madame Récamier paid to Madame de Staël on the

shores of Geneva, she met a royal prince of Prussia, who fell so violently in love with her that he tried to persuade her to get a divorce from her husband, and to marry him. For a moment, dazzled perhaps by the greatness of the alliance, and influenced by Madame de Staël, who seems to have favoured the project, she wavered; but very soon she had the good sense and good feeling to give up the idea. Another eminent personage with whom Madame Récamier kept up a life-long intimacy was Queen Hortense, whose letters to her are pervaded by a tone of flowery sentiment that forcibly reminds us of certain proclamations of her illustrious son.

At the time of the triumphant occupation of Paris by the Allies, Madame Récamier did her best to subjugate the Duke of Wellington to her sway. But like Astolfo in the Enchanted Isle, the great duke fell not before the hitherto all-potent spell, and she, piqued by his indifference, declared that in his letters the English hero did not spell correctly two consecutive words of French. It is after she became permanently settled in Paris, subsequent to the Restoration, that we begin to see Madame Récamier doing her right work in the world. Then we perceive that, though so widely separated by time, by position and by circumstances from the Italian lady, her mission in society was very similar to that of Vittoria Colonna, of whom we spoke in a former paper. Her house in Paris soon became, as it were, a mental hospital, whither resorted all the great men in literature or politics, whose spirits were sick, wounded, or weary; and where the gentle hostess moved about as a true Sister of Charity. The man, however, who owed the most to her in this respect, and with whom her name is chiefly connected during the latter part of her life, is Chateaubriand, the poet, the statesman, and the historian; the man of mighty genius, but of delicate, almost feminine organization; the man who was always saying that he was sick of life, but who, nevertheless, was greedy of praise to the last moment of his existence; the man who was cynical and sentimental in the same breath; the man who was incessantly crying out for rest, and yet still incessantly darting down the river of pleasure or rushing along the railway of business. If ever the heart of Madame Récamier was touched, we believe that it was by this man. But if it was touched, she went about the world as calmly and as gracefully as ever, and "made no sign;" nor have we any reason to think that Chateaubriand, even in word, ever forgot to respect the nominal marriage-tie which bound her. The best proof that the connection between them was free from blame is the friendship that existed between Madame Récamier and Chateaubriand's wife. The position in which M. and Madame de Chateaubriand and Madame Récamier stood towards each other was on the whole very French; and we English women may say, not without pride, that it is a very difficult one for us even to understand; but let us prove by the way in which we think

and speak of this matter, that we can be just as well as pure, tolerant as well as true.

And now, before we come to the closing scene, let us look in for a moment at the assemblies which met around Madame Récamier, just as we looked in a little while since at the assemblies which met around Vittoria Colonna. Among the little groups that sit or stand about the prettily furnished saloon there moves a lady. Her beauty is in its autumn; but there is summer sunshine in the expression which lights up that face. Wherever she moves conversation begins to flow forth, as in the old myth the streams flowed around the path of the beneficent goddess. Learned men pour out majestic floods of language, and witty ladies toss, fountain-like, around them a sparkling spray of graceful nonsense. But, whatever she may be employed in, we notice that this woman's gaze is constantly turning towards a thin, sallow, dark, middle-aged man, whose large, melancholy eyes have a wistful, restless expression in them, which gives one the idea that he is always longing to see beyond this world. Well may she look at him, for soon it will be by the inflexions of his voice alone that Juliette Récamier will be able to read the wishes of Chateaubriand. And now Madame Récamier pauses and speaks the name of Delphine. Those around take up the cry, and "Delphine, Delphine," resounds from every mouth. Then there comes gliding out of a corner, where she has been sitting quietly watching all about her, a slight, simply-dressed, fair-haired young girl, with a pretty, half-shy, half-amused face. They press her a little, while she looks down, and blushes and smiles; a few minutes after, the people in that brightly-lit Parisian saloon have a vision of dewy twilight and greenwood solitudes, for she is repeating her sweet poem upon Evening. This is she whose pen shall advocate the cause of woman with such saucy sprightliness. This is she who (when her future husband, the distinguished journalist, shall be arrested for the boldness of his writing) will nothing daunted, nail the editorial colours to the mast. This is Delphine Gay. Sitting near Madame Récamier, and with his gaze always fixed adoringly upon her, we observe a man who attracts us as much by his gentle, intellectual eyes, as he repels us by the deformed, swelled condition of one side of his face, which was injured long ago in a terrible surgical operation. This is Ballanchard, the tender, elegant essayist, who, for love of Juliette Récamier, has lived all his life a single man. All at once there is a stillness in the room, like that of the air before a thunderstorm. A tall, dark woman has risen in the midst of the assembly and is beginning to repeat "Athalia's Dream" in those polished, evenly balanced lines, peculiar to French tragedy, that, from the lips of an ordinary reader or reciter, always somewhat remind us (may the shade of Racine forgive the prosaic simile!) of the long, swinging gallop of a powerful thorough-bred. At first we are chiefly struck by the stately grace of her attitude, and by the perfect modulation of her voice. But

as she warms to her theme, and as we look at and listen to her, we become gradually persuaded that this woman must have really felt and suffered all that she is telling us about ; until, when we are literally trembling and shrinking back at the thought of the guilty queen being so near us, we are suddenly startled by seeing Madame Récamier throw her arm around the supposed murderess, with the exclamation, " My, Rachel, you have exceeded yourself to-night." But let us cast aside the telescope of fancy, through which we have been looking at those past scenes, and hasten to end our story in as few words as possible.

Madame Récamier lost her sight for many of the last years of her life, but her friends ceased not to crowd around the blind, yet still beautiful, old lady. Such was the fineness of her ear for interpreting people's feelings from their voices, and such the grace and ease with which she moved about the familiar rooms, that one hardly perceived any change in her. As for Chateaubriand, he seems, during his years of declining health, to have rested upon her more completely than ever. Madame Récamier's childhood and youth had fallen upon careless, Godless days ; and the earlier part of her life was certainly wanting in religious earnestness. But during her latter years, many of which were spent in an abbey near Paris, the light of an assured faith and calm hope shone very brightly upon her. Chateaubriand also found now, as he listened to her, a far more perfect rest than even her gentle tact had ever before afforded him. When he was dying, she stood beside him and spoke the name of the Lord of Life, and peace fell upon that troubled spirit, as it fell of old upon the stormy waters. Madame Récamier kept up her power of fascination to the last ; and when, after a short struggle with an epidemic then raging in Paris, she sank to rest, she is said never to have looked more beautiful than after her death.

Such is, we believe, an honest version of the story of Juliette Récamier. Her chief faults (on which her detractors have based all the evil things they have said of her) were too great a love of admiration, and too great a wish to please. In speaking, however, of all these matters we must take into account her education and the mere shadow of domestic life which she enjoyed. Had she possessed a happy home, with the love of husband and children, she would probably have been a very different woman. Let the women of England seek to avoid her faults, and to practise those time-honoured virtues of conjugal truth and love of home which have always been the chief glory of our national womanhood, but which, some say, are dying out amongst us. Let them, also, seek to imitate her nobler qualities, such as her slowness to condemn, her large-hearted charity, and her wide view of mankind in general. Those who are now making such a stir about female education should remember that the first thing our girls need to be taught is catholicity of opinion, and that without it they can attain to no real perfection.

ALICE KING.

ROGER MONK.

I'D never seen such a scene before; I have not seen one since. Perhaps, in fact, the same thing had never happened.

What had done it nobody could imagine. It was as if the place had been smoked out with some deleterious stuff; some destructive or poisoning gases, fatal to vegetable life.

On the previous day but one, Tuesday, there had been a party at the Manor. Squire and Mrs. Todhetley did not go in for much of that kind of thing, but some girls from London were staying with the Jacobsons, and we all went over to a dance there on the Friday. After supper some of them got talking to Mrs. Todhetley, asking in a laughing sort of way why *she* did not give them one? she shook her head, and answered that we were quiet people. Upon that Tod spoke up, and said he had no doubt the Squire would give one if asked; would like to do it. Had Mrs. Todhetley gone heartily into the proposal at once, Tod would have thrown cold water on it. That was his obstinacy. The girls attacked the Squire, and the thing was settled; the dance being fixed for the following Tuesday.

I know Mrs. Todhetley thought it an awful trouble; the Squire openly said it was when we got home; and he grumbled all day on Saturday. You see, our servants were not used to fashionable parties; neither in truth were their masters. However, if it had to be done at all, it was to be done well. The laundry was cleared out for dancing; the old square ironing-stove taken away, and a few pictures were done round with wreaths of green and hung on the yellow-washed walls. The supper-table was laid in the dining-room; leaving the drawing-room free for reception.

It was the Squire thought of having the plants brought into the hall. He never could say afterwards it was any body but him. His grumbling was got over by the Tuesday morning, and he was as eager as any of us. He went about in his open nankeen coat and straw hat, puffing and blowing, and saying he hoped we should relish it—he'd not dance in the dog-days.

"I should like to see you dance in any days now, sir," cried Tod.

"You impudent rascals! You must laugh, too, must you, Johnny! I can tell you young fellows what—you'll neither of you dance a country dance as we'd used to do it. You should have seen us at the wake. Once when we militia chaps were at the "Ram" at Gloucester for a week's training, we gave a ball there, and footed it till daylight. 'We

bucks at the Ram;’ that’s what we called ourselves: but most of us are dead and gone now. Look here, boys,” continued the Pater after a pause, “I’ll have the choice plants brought into the hall. If we knock up a few sconces for candles on the walls, their colours will show out well.”

He went out to talk to Roger Monk about it. Mrs. Todhetley was in the kitchen over the creams and jellies and things, fit to faint with heat. Jenkins, the head-gardener, was back then, but he was stiff yet, not likely to be of permanent good; so Roger Monk was kept on as chief. Under the Pater’s direction the sets of green steps were brought in and put on either side of the hall, as many sets as there was space for; and the plants were arranged upon them.

I’d tell you the different sorts but that you might think it tedious. They were choice and beautiful. Mr. Todhetley took pride in his flowers, and spared no expense. Geraniums of all colours, tulips, brilliant roses, the white lily and the purple iris; and the rarer flowers, with hard names that nobody can spell. It was like a lovely garden, rising tier upon tier; a grove of perfume that the guests would pass through. They managed the wax-lights well; and the colours, pink, white, violet, green, orange, purple, scarlet, blue, shone out as the old east window in Worcester Cathedral used to do when it sparkled in the morning sun.

It went off first-rate. Some of the supper sweet dishes fell out of shape with the heat; but they were just as good to eat. In London, the thing you call “society” is made up of form and coldness, and false artificialism; with us country people it is honest openness. There, any failure on the table is looked away from, not supposed to be seen; at the supper at Squire Todhetley’s the tumble-down dishes were introduced as a topic of regret. “And to think it should be so, after all the pains I bestowed on them!” added Mrs. Todhetley, not hesitating to say that she had been the confectioner and pastry-cook.

But it is not of the party I have to tell you. It was jolly; and everybody said what a prime ball-room the laundry made. I dare say if we had been London fashionables we should have called it the “library,” and made believe we’d had the books taken out.

Getting ready for company is delightful; but putting things to rights the next day is rather another thing. The plants were carried back to their places again in the greenhouse—a large, long, commodious greenhouse—and appeared none the worse for their show. The old folks, whose dancing-days were over, had spent half the night in the cool hall, admiring these beautiful plants; and the Pater told this to Roger Monk as he stood with him in the greenhouse after they were put back. I was there, too.

“I’m glad they were admired, sir,” said Monk in answer. “I’ve taken pains with them, and I think they do the Manor credit.”

"Well, truth to say, Monk, it's a better and brighter collection than Jenkins ever got. But you must not tell him I say so. I do take a pride in my greenhouse; my father did before me. I remember your mother spending a day here once, Johnny, before you were born, and she said of all the collections in the two counties of Warwick and Worcester, ours was the finest. It came up to Lord Coventry's; not as large, of course, but the plants in the same prime condition."

"Yes, sir: I've seen the conservatories at Croome," returned Monk, who generally went in for large names.

"The late Lord Coventry—Yes! Here! Who's calling?"

Tod's voice outside, shouting for the Squire, caused the break. He had got Mr. Duffham with him; who wanted to ask about some parish business; and they came to the greenhouse.

So that made another admirer. Old Duff turned himself and his cane about, saying the colours looked brighter by daylight than wax-light; and he had not thought it possible the night before that they could do it. He stole a piece of geranium to put in his button-hole.

"By the way, Monk, when are you going over to Evesham about those seeds and things?" asked the Squire, as he was departing with old Duff.

"I can go when you like, sir."

"Go to-morrow, then. Start with the cool of the morning. Jenkins can do what has to be done, for once. You had better take the light cart."

"Very well, sir," answered Monk. But he had never once looked in the Squire's face as he answered.

The next morning was Thursday. Tod and I were up betimes to go fishing. There was a capital stream—but I've not time for that now. It was striking six as we went out of the house, and the first thing I saw was Jenkins coming along, his face as white as a sheet. He was a big man once, of middle height, but thin and stooping since his last bout of rheumatism; gray whiskers, blue eyes, and close upon fifty.

"I say, Tod, look at old Jenkins! He must be ill again."

Not ill but frightened. His lips were of a bluey gray, like one whom some great terror has scared. Tod stared as he came nearer, for they were trembling as well as blue.

"What's up, Jenkins?"

"I don't know what, Mr. Joe. The devil has been at work."

"Whereabouts?" asked Tod.

"Come and see, sir."

He turned back towards the greenhouse, but not another word would he say, only pointed to it. Leaving the fishing-rods on the path, we set off to run.

Never had I seen such a scene before; as I told you at the beginning. The windows were shut, every crevice where a breath of air

might enter seemed to be hermetically closed ; a smell as of some sulphurous acid pervaded the air ; and the whole show of plants had turned to ruin.

A wreck complete. Colour was gone ; leaves and stems were gone ; the sweet perfume was gone ; nothing remained, so to say, but the pots. It was as if some burning blast had passed through the greenhouse, withering to death every plant that stood in it, and the ripening grapes above.

"What on earth can have done this?" cried Tod to Jenkins, when he was able to speak.

"Well, Mr. Joseph, I say nothing *could* have done it but the——"

"Don't talk rubbish about the devil, Jenkins. He does not work in quite so practical a way. Open the windows."

"I was on by half-past five, sir, not coming here at first, but——"

"Where's Monk this morning?" again interrupted Tod, who had turned imperative.

"The Squire sent him over to Evesham for the seeds. I heard him go by in the light cart."

"Sent him when?"

"Yesterday, I suppose ; that is, told him to go. Monk came to me last evening and said I must be on early. He started betimes ; it was long afore five when I heard the cart go by. I should know the rattle of that there light cart anywhere, Mr. Joe."

"Never mind the cart. What has done *this*?"

That was the question. What had done it? Some blasting poison must have been set to burn in the greenhouse. Such substances might be common enough, but we knew nothing of them. We examined the place pretty carefully, but not a trace of any proof was discovered.

"What's this?" cried out Jenkins, presently.

Some earthenware pot-stands were stacked on the ground at the far end of the greenhouse—Mrs. Todhetley always called them saucers—Jenkins had been taking two or three of the top ones off, and came upon one that contained a small portion of some soft, white, damp substance, smelling just like the smell that pervaded the greenhouse—a suffocating smell that choked you. Some sulphuric acid was in the tool-house ; Tod fetched the bottle, poured a little on the stuff, and set it alight.

Instantly a white smoke arose, and a smell that sent us off. Jenkins, looking at it as if it were alive and going to bite him, carried it at arm's length out to the nearest bed, and heaped mould upon it.

"That has done it, Mr. Joseph. But I should like to know what the white stuff is. It's some subtle poison."

We took the stack of pot-stands off one by one. Six or eight of them were perfectly clean, as if just wiped out. Jenkins gave his opinion again.

"Them clean saucers have all had the stuff burning in 'em this

night, and they've done their work well. Somebody, which it must be the villain himself, has been in and cleaned 'em out, overlooking one of 'em. I can be upon my word the stands were all dusty enough last Tuesday, when the greenhouse was emptied for the ball, for I stacked 'em myself one upon another."

Tod took up his perch on the edge of the shut-in brick stove, and surveyed the wreck. There was not a bit of green life remaining, not a semblance of it. When he had done looking he stared at me, then at Jenkins; it was his way when puzzled or perplexed.

"Have you seen anybody about here this morning, Jenkins?"

"Not a soul," responded Jenkins, ruefully. "I was about the beds and places at first, and when I came up here and opened the door, the smoke and smell knocked me back'ards. When I see the plants—leastways what was the plants—with their leaves and blossoms and stems all black and blasted, I says to myself, 'The devil must have been in here;' and I was on my way to tell the master so when you two young gents met me."

"But it's time some of them were about," cried Tod. "Where's Drew? Is he not come?"

"Drew be hanged for a lazy vagabond!" retorted old Jenkins. "He never comes on much afore seven, he doesn't. Monk threatened last week to get his wages stopped for him. I did stop 'em once, afore I was ill."

Drew was the under-gardener, an active young fellow of nineteen. There was a boy as well, but it happened that he was away just now. Almost as Jenkins spoke, Drew came in view, leaping along furiously towards the vegetable garden, as though he knew he was late.

"Halloa, Drew!"

He recognized Tod's voice, turned, and came into the greenhouse. His look of amazement would have made a picture.

"Sakes alive! Jenkins, what have done this?"

"Do you know anything about it, Drew?" asked Tod.

"Me, sir?" answered Drew, turning his wide-open eyes on Tod, in surprise at the question. "I don't as much as know what it is."

"Mr. Joe, I think the master ought to be told of this," said Jenkins. "As well get it over."

He meant the explosion of wrath that was sure to come when the Squire saw the ravages. Tod never stirred. Who was to tell him? It was like the mice proposing to bell the cat: nobody offered to do it.

"You go, Johnny," said Tod, by-and-by. "Perhaps he's getting up now."

I went. I did always what he ordered me, and heard Mrs. Tod-hetley in her dressing-room. She had her white petticoats on, doing her hair. When I told her, she just backed into a chair and turned as white as Jenkins.

"What's that, Johnny?" roared out the Squire from his bed. I hadn't noticed that the between-door was open.

"Something is wrong in the greenhouse, sir."

"Something wrong in the greenhouse! What d'ye mean, lad?"

"He says the plants are spoiled, and the grapes," interrupted Mrs. Todhetley, to help me.

"Plants and grapes spoiled! You must be out of your senses, Johnny, to say such a thing. What has spoiled them?"

"It looks like some—blight," I answered, pitching upon the word. "Everything's dead and blackened."

Down stairs I rushed for fear he should ask more. And down came the Pater after me, hardly anything on, so to say; not shaved, and his nankeen coat flying behind him.

I let him go on to get the burst over. When I reached them, they were talking about the key. It was customary for the head-gardener to lock the greenhouse at night. For the past month or so there had been, as may be said, two head-gardeners, and the key had been left on the ledge at the back of the greenhouse, that whichever of them came on first in the morning might get in.

The Squire stormed at this—with that scene before his eyes he was ready to storm at everything. Pretty gardeners, they were! leaving the key where any tramp, hiding about the premises for a night's lodging, might get into the greenhouse and steal what he chose! As good leave the key in the door, as hang it up outside it! The world had nothing but fools in it, as he believed.

Jenkins answered with deprecation. The key was not likely to be found by anybody but those that knew where to look for it. It always had a flower-pot turned down upon it; and so he had found it that morning.

"If all the tramps within ten miles got into the greenhouse, sir, they'd not do this," affirmed Tod.

"Hold your tongue," said the Squire; "what do you know about tramps? I've known them to do the wickedest things conceivable. My beautiful plants! And look at the grapes! I've never had a finer crop of grapes than this was, Jenkins," concluded the Pater, in a culminating access of rage. "If I find this has arisen through any neglect of yours and Monk's, I'll—I'll hang you both."

The morning went on; breakfast was over, and the news of the strange calamity spread. Old Jones, the constable, had been sent for by the Squire. He stared, and exclaimed, and made his comments; but he was not any the nearer hitting upon the guilty man.

About ten, Roger Monk got home from Evesham. We heard the spring-cart go round to the stables, and presently he appeared in the gardens, looking at objects on either side of the path, as was his usual wont. Then he caught sight of us, standing in and about the green-

house, and came on faster. Jenkins was telling the story of his discovery to Mr. Duffham. He had told it a good fifty times since early morning to as many different listeners.

They made way for Monk to come in, nobody saying a word. The Pater stood inside, and Monk, touching his hat, was about to report to him of his journey, when the strange aspect of affairs seemed to strike him dumb. He looked round with a sort of startled gaze at the walls, at the glass and grapes above, at the destroyed plants, and then turned savagely on Jenkins, speaking hoarsely.

"What have you been up to here?"

"*Me* been up to! That's good, that is! What had *you* been up to afore you went off? You had the first chance. Come, Mr. Monk."

The semi-accusation was spoken by Jenkins on the spur of the moment, in his anger at the other's words. Monk was in a degree Jenkins's protégé, and it had not previously occurred to him that *he* could be in any way to blame.

"What do you know of this wicked business, Monk?" asked the Squire.

"What should I know of it, sir? I am only just come in from Evesham. The things were all right last night!"

"How did you leave the greenhouse last night?"

"Exactly as I always leave it, sir. There was nothing the matter with it then. Drew—I saw him outside, didn't I? Step here, Drew. You were with me when I locked up the greenhouse last night. Did you see anything wrong with it?"

"It were right enough then," answered Drew.

Monk turned himself about, lifting his hands in dismay, as one blackened object after another came under view. "I never saw such a thing!" he cried, piteously. "There has been something wrong at work here; or else——"

Monk came to a sudden pause. "Or else what?" asked the squire.

"Or else, the moving of the plants into the hall on Tuesday has killed them."

"Moving the plants wouldn't kill them. What are you thinking of, Monk?"

"*Moving* them would not kill them, sir, or hurt them either," returned Monk, with a stress on the first word; "but it might have been the remote cause of it."

"I don't understand you!"

"I saw some result of the sort once, sir. It was at a gentleman's place at Chiswick. All the choice plants were taken indoors to improvise a kind of conservatory for a night fête. They were carried back the next day, seemingly none the worse, and on the morrow were found withered."

"Like these?"

"No, sir, not so bad as these. They didn't die; they revived after a time. A great fuss was made over it; the gentleman thought it must be wilful damage, and offered twenty pounds reward for the discovery of the offenders. At last it was found they had been poisoned by the candles."

"Poisoned by the candles!"

"A new sort of candle, very beautiful to look at, but with a vast quantity of arsenic in it," continued Monk. "A scientific man gave it as his opinion, that the poison emitted from the candles had been fatal to the plants. Perhaps something of the same kind has done the mischief here, sir. Plants are such delicate things!"

"And what has been fatal to the grapes. *They* were not taken into the house."

The question came from the surgeon, Mr. Duffham. He had stood all the while against the end of the far steps, looking fixedly at Monk over the top of his cane. Monk put his eyes on the grapes above, and kept them there while he answered.

"True, sir; the grapes, as you say, didn't go in. Perhaps the poison brought back by the plants may have acted on them."

"Now, I tell you what, Monk, I think that's all nonsense," cried the Squire, testily.

"Well, sir, I don't see any other way of accounting for this state of things."

"The greenhouse was filled with some suffocating, smelling, blasting stuff that knocked me back'ards," put in Jenkins. "Every crack and crevice was stopped where a breath of air could have got in. I wish it had been you to find it; you'd not have liked to be smothered alive, I know."

"I wish it had been," said Monk. "If there was any such thing here, and not your fancy, I'll be bound I'd have traced it out."

"Oh, would you! Did you do anything to them there pot-stands?" continued Jenkins, pointing to them.

"No."

"Oh! didn't clean 'em out?"

"I wiped a few out on Wednesday morning before we brought back the plants. Somebody—Drew, I suppose—had stacked them in the wrong place. In putting them right I began to wipe them. I didn't do them all; I was called away."

"'Twas me stacked 'em," said Jenkins. "Well—they stands are what had held the poison; I found a'most one half of 'em filled with it."

Monk cast a rapid glance around. "What was the poison?" he asked.

Jenkins grunted, but gave no other reply. The fact was, he had been so abused by the Squire for having put away the trace of the "stuff," that it was a sore subject.

"Did you come on here, Monk, before you started for Evesham this morning?" questioned the squire.

"I didn't come near the gardens, sir. I had told Jenkins last night to be on early," replied Monk, bending over a blackened row of plants while he spoke. "I went the back way to the stables through the lane, had harnessed the horse to the cart, and was away before five."

We quitted the greenhouse. The Pater went out with Mr. Duffham, Tod and I followed. I, looking quietly on, had been struck with the contrast of manner between old Duff and Monk—he peering at Monk with his searching gaze, never once taking it off him; and Monk meeting nobody's eyes, but shifting his own anywhere rather than meet them.

"About this queer arsenic tale Monk tells?" began the Squire. "Is there anything in it? Will it hold water?"

"Moonshine!" said old Duff, with emphasis.

The tone was curious, and we all looked at him. He had got his lips drawn in, and the top of his cane pressing them.

"Where did you take Monk from, Squire? Get a good character with him?"

"Jenkins brought him here. As to character, he had never been in any situation before. Why? Do you suspect him?"

"Um-m-m!" said the doctor, drawing out the sound as though in doubt. "If I do suspect him, he has caused me to. I never saw such a shifty manner in all my life. Why, he never once looked at any of us! His eyes are false, and his tones are false!"

"His tones? Do you mean his words?"

"I mean the tone his words are spoken in. To an apt ear, the sound of a man's voice, or woman's either, can be read off like a book; a man's voice is honest or dishonest according to his nature; and you can't make a mistake about it. Monk's has a false ring in it, if ever I heard one. Now, master Johnny, what are you looking so eager about?"

"I think Monk's voice false, too, Mr. Duffham; I have thought himself false all along. Tod knows I have."

"I know that you are just a muff, Johnny, going in for prejudices against people unreasonably," said Tod, putting me down as usual.

Old Duff pushed my straw hat up, and passed his fingers over the top of my forehead. "Johnny, my boy," he said, "you have got a strong and good indication here for reading the world. *Trust to it.*"

"I couldn't trust Monk. I never have trusted him. That was one reason why I suspected him of stealing the things the magpie took."

"Well, you were wrong there," said Tod.

"Yes. But I'm nearly sure I was right in the thing before."

"What thing?" demanded old Duff, sharply.

"Well, I thought it was Monk that frightened Phœby."

"Oh," said Mr. Duffham. "Dressed himself up in a sheet, and whitened his face, and went up the lane when the women were watching for the shadows on St. Mark's Eve! What else do you suspect, Johnny?"

"Nothing else, sir; except that I fancied Mother Picker knew of it. When Tod and I went to ask her whether Monk was out that night, she looked frightened to death, and broke a basin."

"Did she say he was out?"

"She said he was not out; but I thought she said it more eagerly than truthfully."

"Squire, when you are in doubt as to peoples' morals, let this boy read them for you," said old Duff, in his quaint way. The Squire, thinking of his plants, looked as perplexed as could be.

"It is such a thing, you know, Duffham, to have one's whole hot-house destroyed in a night. It's no better than arson."

"And the incendiary who did it would have no scruple in attacking the barns next; therefore, he must be bowled out."

The Pater looked rueful. He could bluster and threaten, but he could not *do* much; he never knew how to set about it. In all emergencies he would send for Jones—the greatest old woman going.

"You don't seriously think it could have been Monk, Duffham?"

"I think there's strong suspicion that it was. Look here:" and the doctor began to tell off points with his cane and fingers. "*Somebody* goes into the greenhouse to set the stuff alight in the pot-stands—for that's how it was done. Monk and Jenkins alone knew where the key was; Jenkins, a trusty man, years in the employ, comes on at six and finds the state of things. Where's Monk? Gone off by previous order to Evesham at five. Why should it happen the very morning he was away? What was to prevent him stealing into the greenhouse after dark last night, putting his deleterious stuff to work, leaving it to burn, and stealing in again at four this morning to put all traces away? He thought he cleaned out all the tale-telling earthen saucers, but he overlooks one, as is usually the case. When he comes back, finding the wreck and the commotion consequent upon it, he relates a glib tale of other plants destroyed by arsenic from candles, and he never looks honestly into a single face as he tells it!"

The Squire drew a deep breath. "And you say Monk did all this?"

"Nonsense, Squire. I say he might have done it. I say, moreover, that it looks very like it. Putting Monk aside, your scent would be wholly at fault."

"What is to be done?"

"I'll go and see Mother Picker; she can tell what time he went in last night, and what time he came out this morning," cried Tod, who was just as hasty as the Pater. But old Duff caught him as he was vaulting off.

"I had better see Mother Picker. Will you let me act in this matter, Squire, and see what can be made of it?"

"Do, Duffham. Take Jones to help you?"

"Jones be shot," returned Duff in a passion. "If I wanted anybody—which I *don't*—I'd take Johnny. He is worth fifty Joneses. *Say nothing*—nothing at all. Do you understand?"

He went off down a side path, and crossed Jenkins, who was at work now. Monk stayed in the greenhouse.

"This is a sad calamity, Jenkins."

"It's the worst I ever met with, sir," cried Jenkins, touching his hat. "And what have done it is the odd thing. Monk, he talks of the candles poisoning of 'em; but I don't know."

"Well, there's not a much surer poison than arsenic, Jenkins," said the doctor, candidly. "I hope it will be cleared up. Monk, too, has taken so much pains with the plants. He is a clever young man in his vocation. Where did you hear of him?"

Jenkins's answer was a long one. Curtailed, it stated that he had heard of Monk "promiskeous." He had thought him a gentleman till he asked if he, Jenkins, could help him to a place as ornamental gardener. He had rather took to the young man, and recommended the Squire to employ him "temporay," for he, Jenkins, was just then falling sick with rheumatism.

Mr. Duffham nodded approvingly. "Didn't think it necessary to ask for references?"

"Monk said he could give me a cart-load a'most of them, sir, if I'd wanted to see 'em."

"Just so! Good day, Jenkins, I can't stay gossiping my morning away."

He went straight to Mrs. Picker's, and caught her taking her luncheon off the kitchen table—bread and cheese, and perry.

"It's a little cask o'last year's my son have made me a present of, sir; if you'd be pleased to drink a cup, 'Doctor Duff'm," said she, hospitably.

She drew a half-pint cup full; bright, sparkling, full-bodied perry, never better made in Gloucestershire. Mr. Duffham smacked his lips, and wished some of the champagne at gentlemen's tables was half as good. He talked, and she talked; and, it may be, he took her a little off her guard. Evidently, she was not cognizant of the mishap to the greenhouse.

A nice young man that lodger of hers? Well, yes, he was; steady and well-conducted. Talked quite like a gentleman, but wasn't uppish 'cause o' that, and seemed satisfied with all she did for him. He was gone off to Evesham after seeds and other things. Squire Todhetley put great confidence in him.

"Ay," said Mr. Duffham, "to be sure. One does put confidence

in steady young men, you know, goody. He was off by four o'clock, wasn't he?"

Earlier nor that, Goody Picker thought. Monk were one o' them who liked to take time by the forelock, and get his extra work forrard when he were put on to any.

"Nothing like putting the shoulder to the wheel. This *is* perry! The next time I call to see your son Peter, at Alcester, I shall ask him if he can't get some for me. As to Monk—you might have had young fellows here who'd have idled their days away, and paid no rent, goody. Monk was at his work late last night, too, I fancy?"

Goody fancied he had been; leastways he went out after supper, and were gone an hour or so. What with the fires, and what with the opening and shutting o' the winders to keep the hot-houses at proper temperature, an head-gardener didn't sit on a bed o' idle roses, as Dr. Duff'm knew.

Mr. Duffham was beginning to make pretty sure of winning his game. His manner suddenly changed. Pushing the empty cup from him, he leaned forward, and laid hold of Mrs. Picker by the two wrists. Between the perry and the doctor's sociability and Monk's merits, her eyes had begun to sparkle.

"Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Picker. I have come here to ask you a question, *and you must answer me*. But you have nothing to fear on your own score, provided you tell me the truth honestly. Young men will do foolish things, however industrious they may be. Why did Monk play that prank on Easter Monday?"

The sparkle in the eyes faded to a sort of pale fright. She would have got away, but could not, and so put on an air of wonder.

On Easter Monday! What were it he did on Easter Monday?

"When he put himself and his face into white, and went to the churchyard by moonlight to represent the dead, you know, Mrs. Picker."

She gave a shrill scream, got one of her hands loose and flung it over her face.

"Come, goody, you had better answer me quietly than be taken to confess before Squire Todhetley. I dare say you were not to blame."

Afore Squire Todhetley! O-o-o-o-h! Did they know it at the Manor?

"Well," said Mr. Duffham, "you see I know it, and I have come straight from thence. Now then, my good woman, I have not much time."

Goody Picker's will was good to hold out longer, but she surrendered à coup de main, as so many of us have to do when superior power is brought to bear. Monk overheard it, was the substance of her answer. On coming in from work that there same blessed evening—and look at him now! at his work on a Easter Monday till past dark!—he overheard the two servants, Molly and Hannah, talking of what they was

going out to watch for—the shadders in the churchyard. He let 'em go, never showing hisself till they'd left the house. Then he got the sheets from his bed, and put the flour on his face, and went on there to frighten 'em; all in fun. He never thought of hurting the women; he never knowed as the young girl, Phœby, was to be there. Nobody could be more sorry for it nor he was; but he'd never meant to do harm more nor a babby unborn.

Mr. Duffham released the hands. Looking back in reflection, he had little doubt it was as she said—that Monk had done it out of pure sport, not intending ill.

"He might have confessed: it would have been more honest. And you! why did you deny that it was Monk?"

Mrs. Picker at first could only stare in reply. Confess to it? Him? What, and run the risk o' being put into ancuffs by that there Jones with his fat legs? And she! a poor old widder? If Monk went and said he didn't do it, she couldn't go and say he *did*. Doctor Duff'm might see as there were no choice left for *her*. Never should she forget the fright when the two young gents come in with their queries the next day; her fingers was took with the palsy and dropped the pudd'n basin, as she'd had fifteen year. Monk, poor fellow, couldn't sleep for a peck o' nights after, thinking o' Phœby.

"There; that's enough," said Mr. Duffham. "Who is Monk? Where does he come from?"

From the moon, for all Mrs. Picker knew. A civiler young nian she'd not wish to have lodging with her; paid reg'lar as the Saturdays come round; but he never told her nothing about hisself.

"Which is his room? The one at the back, I suppose."

Without saying with your leave, or by your leave, as Mrs. Picker phrased it in telling the story a long while afterwards, Mr. Duffham penetrated at once into the lodger's room. There he took the liberty of making a slight examination, good Mrs. Picker standing by with round eyes and open mouth. And what he discovered caused him to stride off at once to the Pater.

Roger Monk was not Monk at all, but somebody else. He had been implicated in some crime (whether guilty or not remained yet a question), and to avoid exposure had come away into this quiet locality under a false name. In short, during the time he had been working as gardener at Dyke Manor and living at Mother Picker's, he was in hiding. As the son of a well-known and most respectable landscape and ornamental nursery-man, he had become thoroughly conversant with the requisite duties.

"They are fools, at the best, these fellows," remarked Duffham, as he finished his narrative. "A letter written to him by some friend betrayed to me all this. Now why should not Monk have destroyed that letter, instead of keeping it in his room, Squire?"

The Squire did not answer. All he could do just now was to wipe his hot face and try and get over his amazement. Monk not a gardener or servant at all, but an educated man! Only living there to hide from the police; and calling himself by any name that came uppermost—which happened to be Monk!

"I must say there's a certain credit due to him for his patient industry, and the perfection to which he has brought your grounds," said Mr. Duffham.

"And for blighting all my hot-house plants at a blow—is there credit due to him for that?" roared out the Squire. "I'll have him tried for it, as sure as my name's Todhetley."

It was easier said than done. For when Mr. Jones, receiving his private orders from the Pater, went, staff in hand, to arrest Monk, that gentleman had already departed.

"He come into the house just as Dr. Duff'm left it," explained Mrs. Picker. "Saying he had got to take a short journey, he put his things into his portmanty, and went off carrying of it, leaving me a week's rent on the table."

"Go and catch him, Jones," sternly commanded the Squire, when the constable came back with the above news.

"Yes, your worship," replied Jones. But how he was to do it, taking the gouty legs into consideration, was a quite a different thing.

The men were sent off various ways. And came back again, not having come up with Monk. Squire Todhetley went into a rage, abused old Jones, and told him he was no longer worth his salt. But the strangest thing occurred in the evening.

The Pater walked over to the court after tea, carrying the grievance of his destroyed plants to the Sterlings. In coming up Dyke Lane as he returned at night, where it was always darker than in other places because the trees hid the moonlight, somebody seemed to walk right out of the hedge upon him.

It was Roger Monk. He raised his hat to the Squire as a gentleman does—did not touch it as a gardener—and began pleading for clemency.

"Clemency, after destroying a whole hot-houseful of rare plants!" cried the Squire.

"I never did it, sir," returned Monk, passionately. "On my word as a man—I will not to you say as a gentleman—if the plants were not injured by the candles, as I fully believe, I know not how they could have been injured."

The Pater was staggered. At heart he was the best man living. Suppose Monk *was* innocent?

"Look here, Monk. You know your name is——"

"Hush, sir!" interposed Monk, hastily, as if to prevent the hedges hearing the true name. "It is of that I have waited to speak to you;

to beseech your clemency. I have no need to crave it in the matter of plants which I never harmed. I want to ask you to be silent, sir; not to proclaim to the world that I am other than what I appeared to be. A short while longer and I should have been able to prove my innocence; things are working round. But if you set the hue-and-cry upon me——"

"Were you innocent?" interposed the squire.

"I was; I swear it to you. Oh, Mr. Todhetley, think for a moment! I am not so very much older than your son; he is not more innocent than I was; but it might happen that he—I crave your pardon, sir, but it *might*—that he should become the companion of dissipated young men, and get mixed up unwittingly in a disgraceful affair, whose circumstances were so complicated that he could only fly for a time and hide himself. What would you say if the people with whom he took refuge, whether as servant or else, were to deliver him up to justice, and he stood before the world an accused felon? Sir, it is my case. Keep my secret; keep my secret, Mr. Todhetley."

"And couldn't you prove your innocence?" cried the Squire, as he followed out the train of ideas suggested.

"Not at present—that I see. And when once a man has stood at a criminal bar, it is a ban on him for life, although it may be afterwards shown he stood there wrongly."

"True," said the Squire, softening.

Well—for there's no space to go on at length—the upshot was that Monk went away with a promise; and the Squire came home to the Manor and told Duffham, who was waiting there, that they must both be silent. Only those two knew of the discovery; they had kept the particulars and Monk's real name to themselves. Duff gave his head a toss, and told the Pater he was softer than old Jones.

"How came *you* to suspect him, Johnny?" he continued, turning on me in his sharp way.

"I think just for the same things that you did, Mr. Duffham—because neither his face nor his voice is *true*."

And—remembering his look of revenge when accused in mistake for the magpie—I suspected him still.

JOHNNY LUDLOW.



OUT OF THE WORLD.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

I.

MY mother was born of the lineage and sect of the Friends, but by marrying out of the Society she forfeited her membership. Nevertheless, when by her premature death, which quickly followed my father's, I was left an orphan, her kindred placed me in a Friends' school, where I had the privilege of being trained under their strictest discipline. I was educated to be a governess; and in my nineteenth year an advantageous situation was offered to me through my instructress, Sarah Glazebrook.

"Lydia," said Sarah to me, "Rachel Archer, who, like thy mother, hath married out of the Society, hath need of a teacher for her young children, and having been thy mother's early friend, she asketh me to send thee to her. There is no more than one objection. It is a worldly family, in which Rachel testifieth in vain; the more so as Caleb Archer hath a son and daughter by a former wife, who was altogether of the world. Notwithstanding, I have accepted the offer for thee; and now I advise thee to avoid too much converse with the young people, and I warn thee against all sinful and foolish conformity. Thou art not yet an accepted member of our Society, and the offer is a good offer, therefore I counsel thee to accept it in a spirit of thankfulness."

I had passed almost all my life in the calm seclusion of the school, and I shrank somewhat from venturing into the world, yet the adventurous spirit of youth was not altogether dismayed at the prospect of this change. But when I had finally quitted my teachers, and my schoolmaster, and cast aside for ever the mantle of childhood, with all childish things, my heart sank within me, as one who was launched, without helm or rudder, upon untried and shoreless seas.

It was 17th day, 1st month, when I made my first journey alone by railway. A keen north wind was blowing, which penetrated into the carriage, and called forth many ungoverned expressions of discontent from my fellow-travellers. As I glanced briefly upon the peevish faces of the women, and upon their furbelows and fripperies, I felt thankful that I had been trained to a disregard of foolish fashions, and to preserve a due restraint over my temper. Yet I grew somewhat uncomfortable and abashed as I found myself scrutinized superciliously by them, and by their companion, a worldly-looking man, who besought me to

wrap myself up in his rug ; but I declined, as I liked not his looks. Therefore it pleased me well to reach my destination, a small country town, which was five miles from the abode of Rachel Archer ; but I drew back into a dark corner of the station, having a silly dread of meeting my employer, until the train had started on again. Then I heard a rough, thick voice, shouting to the porter.

"Is there a young lady got out, with boxes, of the name of Miss Carey?" it inquired.

"All right," called the porter ; and forthwith I compelled myself to go forward, and own my luggage. It was a man-servant who had come to meet me, with a gig ; and in a few minutes we had started. A wide, open country lay around us, which I could see but dimly, because of the approaching night ; but soon the over-arching sky rose above us, glittering with stars, which marked by small points of twinkling light the extent of the distant and level horizon, where in the west, far away, there was still a brighter hue than in the cold north and the dark east. We drove between trim hedge-rows, bare, and frosted over with the snow, which was beginning to fall ; and here and there we passed groves and avenues of leafless trees, which seemed instinct with more than inanimate life, for they waved, and beckoned, and gesticulated to one another, and clasped each other with intertwined boughs, in a thousand grotesque attitudes. Everything was strange, exciting, and mysterious to me, and with the foolish fear of meeting Rachel Archer, and her worldly family, pressing upon me, I could have been content, methought, to go on thus for ever, wrapped in silent meditation, that should know no interruption or end. Yet the falling snow chilled the breath upon my lips, and numbed my aching limbs, until, fearing to grow drowsy with the cold, I roused myself to speak to the man-servant at my side.

"Canst thou tell me how far we are still from thy master's house?" I asked.

"I dunnot know," said the man.

"Art thou ill, friend?" I asked again, for he bent himself almost double on his seat, as if he suffered great pain.

"No, no, miss !" he answered, huskily ; "a little in disguise may-be, but that's all. Don't be afraid."

I remember now with a smile the girlish terror that filled my mind upon receiving this extraordinary and unintelligible reply ; and as I sat nervously watching his frantic efforts to urge on the horse, a sudden jerk of the gig threw me out on the roadside, while he drove on, apparently unconscious of the accident which had befallen me.

For a few minutes I lay stunned by the fall, but presently I recovered somewhat, and attempted to rise. An acute and admonitory pain compelled me to desist, and scarcely able to repress a groan, I sank back again upon the snowy ground. A profound and awful silence brooded

over the place, broken only by the gurgling of a half-frozen brook, which was oozing torpidly along its course within reach of my hand, and by the creaking of the boughs of an old yew-tree, which towered gaunt and darksome before me. There was no sound of life, and as I lay there, in pain and terror, I recollected that we had been driving between vast corn-fields, lying desolate in winter fallow. I strove earnestly against the deadness that was creeping subtly over me, while I thought of the safe and peaceful home I had left in the morning, and of my school companions, who were now talking of me as they sat round their fire. How long I lay thus, I did not know; but my life was slowly ebbing away, when I was once more roused by hearing the approaching hoof-beats of a horse ringing upon the frosty road. I lifted up my voice with the feeble wail of an infant, and in a minute or two afterwards a horseman came up, who, seeing me, dismounted.

"What is this? Who are you?" he asked, bending over me. I was too exhausted to answer, and he stood for a minute in hesitation.

"Well, Duchess!" he said, addressing his horse, "you see what is the matter. Here is a child or a woman to be carried to the Lodge, and as I cannot manage both of you, you must find your way home yourself, my lass."

Though the stranger lifted me up tenderly, the agony of being stirred was so great, that I could no longer contain the groan which had been hovering upon my lips. He spoke to me soothingly, with a voice that seemed to me like the voice of an angel, and after a short season of excruciating pain, I was lying upon an old-fashioned settle by a cottage fire, and beside me stood a comely young man, in a scarlet coat, and an aged woman, whose wrinkled face was edged about by a mob-cap.

"Can you tell me now who you are, and what your name is?" asked the young man, seeing my eyes opened upon them.

"Lydia," I murmured; but then my tongue seemed frozen in its utterance, and an icy hand was laid upon my heart. There ensued a long period of unconsciousness, and by the time it was passed I was resting upon the old woman's bed, in a low room, whose ceiling shelved down nearly to the floor on either side, and with a small, uncurtained, lattice casement close by me, through which, as I turned my head, I could see a wide plain of whitening fields stretching away into darkness. And in the room below I could hear the voices of two men.

"Not a letter or paper of any kind, Caleb," said the voice I had already heard. "Only a poor little purse, with ten shillings in it."

"It must be Miss Carey," answered a deeper and graver tone. "Robinson drove up some time ago in a drunken state, and he had quite forgotten what he had been to the town for."

"If that be Caleb Archer," said I to the aged woman sitting at my side, "tell him I am Lydia Carey, his children's instructress."

Truly, there is no need for me to give a detailed account of my suf-

ferings ; such need no comment, as being the common lot of our frail humanity. But there now began a change in my inner self, whether for good or evil time alone could prove. Rachel Archer and her husband, and the son Caleb, whose voice it was I had heard saying that it must be Lydia Carey, were kind to me, and solicitous, during my sojourn at the Lodge, which was at the entrance of a park possessed by a Colonel Kynnaston ; but their home was two miles away, and their visits were but for a short time daily. It was Vincent Kynnaston, the son of Colonel Kynnaston, who had rescued me from my grievous peril, when returning from the vain and worldly pursuit of hunting ; and it was he who spent the chief part of his time with me, after I was well enough to be carried down into the little cottage parlour. It was a new and strange experience to both of us ; never had he known a Friend, whose mind and spirit had been disciplined and trained ; never had I known a man whose ways were the ways of the world, of which I had seen little, and been taught nothing.

At length the day came when I could be removed to the abode of Rachel Archer. I felt dejected all the morning, but I strove to preserve my self-control, until slumber for a time overpowered me, and wrapped me in a peaceful oblivion. When I awoke, Vincent Kynnaston stood over me, and was bending down towards me.

"How beautiful your eyes are, as they open after sleep," said he, as I looked up into his face : "so dark and soft, with a calm, innocent light in them like those of a child !"

"Nay, Vincent," I answered, "it doth not beseem thee to speak idle words of flattery, nor me to listen to them. And I would pray thee to stand a little farther off."

"What if I had kissed you while you were sleeping, little daisy ?" he said.

I chose not to reply, but there ran through me a tremor not altogether of anger ; though no man's lips had been laid upon mine since my father's death.

"The calmest, most unruffled little dove !" he muttered. Truly, his pleasant words had a witchery for my young ears, as I drank them into my heart and memory. "I wonder," added he, "if Quakers have any passions."

"Of a truth," I replied, "there are occasions when I feel the risings of anger, but I trust that I keep a watch over myself."

"But are you never troubled with a vague, and almost pleasant sense of trouble ?" asked he ; "have you no unsatisfied longings, and vehement wishes, which you cannot master ?"

"I have," I said, after a few minutes' thought, "of late experienced a certain feeling of disquietude, akin to pain and pleasure, like that of a young bird trying its unfledged wings on the edge of the nest. I am afraid of something, I know not what."

"Poor, little dove!" he said, and there fell upon him a mood of serious self-communing and inward searching, which I would not break through; and before he spoke again, Caleb Archer's carriage was coming up the road, upon which he bade me farewell hastily, and left the Lodge by a back entrance.

Caleb Archer was a wealthy man, holding, upon an advantageous lease, nearly one-half of Colonel Kynnaston's lands; and his household was appointed with every regard to comfort and luxury. Rachel, my mother's early friend, was kind to me, but I soon saw that she was indiscreet and worldly-minded, conforming to fashion, and forbearing to bear witness against the prevailing follies about her. After a time, she bade me no longer call her by her given name of Rachel, because the silly servants and young children laughed thereat; and, as I was young, and under her orders, I obeyed; but it destroyed my trust in her circumspection and singleness of spirit, which afterwards was an evil to me.

There were, as Sarah Glazebrook had told me, two children of Caleb Archer's by a former marriage. The eldest, Ellen, was an unmarried woman of thirty years of age, greatly afflicted by a spinal disease, which confined her to her couch in one room of the spacious house. Caleb, the son, was studying for what they termed Holy Orders; and his father was about to buy for him the next presentation to the living of their own parish church, which was in the gift of Colonel Kynnaston. "A gift," they called it, though he was about to make merchandize of the office of the priesthood. Therefore, the younger Caleb was very diligently studying the Greek Testament, for his examination for the office of a Deacon; and he was wont to study of an evening in his sister's sitting-room. Now, it was not at all the will of either Rachel Archer or her husband that I should spend my leisure hours in their company, and so it came to pass that I was ordered to sit in Ellen Archer's room also; a thing which displeased her greatly, as she attributed it to a design on the part of her step-mother that the young man should be attracted by my poor, childish self, who had come among them as innocent of scheming as a child could be.

There had been of old a boyish friendship between Vincent and Caleb, begun at school, and strengthening for some years of early manhood. When the first small breach was made I cannot tell; but I know that the only token of friendship which was manifest to me, was that Vincent came often of an evening, interrupting Caleb's studies by light but clever converse; whereat the latter was wont to look gloomy, especially so when Vincent was most merry, and made me laugh the most unguardedly. For, seek as I would to withdraw my mind by dwelling upon those subjects of meditation prescribed to me by Sarah Glazebrook, my meditation was ineffectual, for vain thoughts invaded my mind, even when I was only expecting Vincent's arrival. How much more so, then, when he was present!

II.

UPON the first First Day, while the family were away at their worship in the parish church, I had a quiet season in my own chamber, which was of profit to me, inasmuch as I very diligently examined myself as to my conduct towards the young man, Caleb Archer; and I determined to maintain a discreet and reserved conversation with respect to him, seeing that we were unavoidably brought into daily and familiar intercourse, whereof might spring much that was inconvenient, as I was no more than a poor, hired governess, and he the eldest son of a wealthy father, ambitious of this world's goods. And as I glanced at my mirror for a moment I was fain to acknowledge, though without any promptings of vanity, that there were reasons for holding myself aloof from too frequent companionship with the younger Caleb Archer.

When the spring was sufficiently advanced, it grew to be my habit on a First Day morning to take my book, and go out into the quiet fields, where I could meditate, as the patriarchs of old were wont to do, amidst the beauties of creation. There was one favourite spot of mine, where a fallen tree lay beside a noisy little brook, which, winding capriciously in and out, had formed almost an island, where grew a clump of many different trees, upon which the half opened leaf-buds resemble so many green butterflies resting upon the branches with their wings folded. I was sitting there one morning, neither reading nor meditating, but in a delicious enjoyment almost too strong to be lawful, when two hands were suddenly placed before my eyes, and, after freeing myself, I saw Vincent Kynnaston standing behind me.

"Thou here!" I exclaimed, "is there, then, no worship at thy church?"

"Yes, Lydia," he said, and added solemnly; "but I have a scruple lest it should be a sinful mockery to attend divine service, when my heart is not in the prayer."

"Truly," I replied, "thou should'st not mock the Deity with an empty ceremony. But wherefore art not thou prepared beforehand for what thou believest a duty?"

Then it was that Vincent Kynnaston, though several years older than I, and far wiser and more learned in man's wisdom, did ask me to instruct him in holy things, whereof I found him to be heathenishly ignorant. And not only then, but at divers other times, he came to me for instruction upon First Day morning, when peradventure I should have been more profitably employed in self-communion and meditation.

About six months after I had entered the family of Rachel Archer, she and her children, in their unchecked and undisciplined manner, became desirous of seeing a hundred-year aloe which was in blossom in Colonel Kynnaston's conservatories, and they must needs have it that I should go with them, though I felt an inward warning not to accompany them. I had not yet seen Vincent's father, and I dared not lift up my

eyes when we were led into his presence, until Vincent took my hand and led me gently forward.

"Father," he said, "this is the young lady whose life I had the happiness to save."

Then I looked up, and saw a fine, noble-looking man, with great majesty but great kindness of appearance, whose eyes were fixed gravely and penetratingly upon me. He bade Vincent offer his arm to Rachel Archer, while he himself walked beside me, asking me many questions with an air of almost fatherly interest, in such sort that I soon conversed with him freely, telling him all the little history of my life; and it was not till I saw a look of anxious disappointment upon Vincent's face that I felt myself any feeling of dissatisfaction with my visit.

The next evening as I sat alone with Ellen Archer, Vincent Kynnaston entered the room abruptly, with a gloomy and displeased countenance; and presently he told Ellen that he was going away to London for a season, at the instance of his father. I spoke not, for he addressed himself not to me, but shortly afterwards a gracious spirit of self-communing fell upon me; and as I had too often resisted its devout influence in the presence of these worldly people, I bade them farewell calmly, and with quiet steps retired to my own school-room.

But as I closed the door softly behind me, whither fled the calm spirit that had descended upon me? What meant this throbbing of my heavy heart; and these burning tears that welled up to mine eyes? I hastened to the window, and looked out upon the brightness of the summer sunset. A radiant glory streamed down from the golden sky upon all the scene before me. In the evening air the swallows whirled in giddy mazes, and busy insects on gauzy wings pursued one another in gay career. The pigeons were cooing softly in the dovecot near at hand; and in the ivy under my casement I could see a late brood of young birds, lying closely in their nests, while the parent-birds chirped and twittered upon the ivy twigs around. Far away in a distant field, where brighter gleams of sunshine seemed to linger, I could distinguish the forms of Caleb and Rachel Archer, and of their young children, standing amongst their harvest-men. Yet I looked with weeping eyes upon the beauty and the gladness; for I was alone, and had no share in either.

"Why did you run away from me?" asked a voice at my ear, which stirred my heart to a great and tumultuous throb; "and what is the meaning of these tears trembling in your eyes, and falling fast upon your hands?"

"I am alone," I sobbed, "a stranger sojourning among strangers who love me not."

"And is this the trouble that makes you weep, Lydia?" said Vincent, drawing me away from the window, "is it only loneliness that stirs your quiet soul with agitation?"

I tried to turn away my face, but he held it fast between both his hands, and gazed with glowing eyes into mine.

"Little waif," said he, "think you that you can ever be alone again and friendless while I live? Give me the life I saved. Become mine altogether, and you shall never know what it is to be alone."

My heart gave a great leap of joy and exultation, the echo and assent to his demand, and he interpreted my answer truly; and stooping down he kissed me again and again.

"Nay, Vincent," I said, hiding my face from his kisses, "it doth not beseem thee to be so uncontrolled."

"Uncontrolled!" he repeated: "good heavens! Lydia, you do not know what self-control is. Do you love me? How much do you love me?"

I answered this question as I used to answer my father when I was a child, by flinging my arms around him, and clinging to him with all my might.

"So this is my demure little Quaker!" he said, laughing, but holding me fast to him. "Listen, my Lydia. You must not let this be known; it must be for a time a secret between us, buried in our hearts. It is because Colonel Kynnaston is afraid of you that he has found this business for me in London; and he will get you sent away in my absence. But our old woman at the Lodge will send your letters to me, and give you mine."

"And now," he said, after a long time, when in the gray twilight we saw Caleb and Rachel returning home with their children, "now I must leave you, for I would have no one know that I have been here in my Lydia's secluded school-room. Be faithful to me, my darling!"

"I will be faithful to thee. Farewell, Vincent," I whispered.

A moment afterwards his hasty feet descended noiselessly the staircase; and when Rachel entered the room, as she did by-and-by, I was looking out calmly upon the moon rising behind a copse of fir-trees far-away to the east.

"Lydia," she said, laying her arm affectionately about me, "you have pleased us well, and won our affections, even those of my step-daughter, Ellen; and yet, dear child, I must part with you. My husband considers you too young—nay, I will add, too pretty—to be thrown into daily intercourse with his son Caleb."

"Nay," I answered, "the young man hath not regarded me with favour hitherto. Thou need not be afraid for him."

"Caleb is of a reserved and self-contained nature," replied Rachel. "and an innocent child like you cannot tell what are marks of favour. You must leave us, but not suddenly, as if in disgrace. Be prudent, dear Lydia, in your behaviour towards him, and you can stay until I have found a safer home for you."

I felt angered at her double-mindedness and dissimulation; for, both

on Caleb's part and mine, our conversation had been circumspect and discreet. Moreover, had not Vincent but just disclosed to me the secret spring of this change? Colonel Kynnaston had sent me away from my employment and my home.

It was in the eighth month that Caleb and Rachel Archer, with their elder children, went to tarry a while at the sea-side, while I was left behind to tend the home, and the little ones, and the invalid, Ellen. And here I would rather insert a letter of Ellen Archer's to Rachel, which came into my hands many years afterwards, than oppress my memory by recalling my own impressions of the circumstances therein narrated.

"I promised," she wrote, "to give you as minute an account of Lydia's actions as is possible to me, confined as I am to one room. There has been, as you know, a mysterious change in her of late; and yesterday the mystery was solved thus:—

"Vincent is come home, of course, for the shooting season; and he and Caleb were examining their fowling-pieces in my room, and trying them on the lawn outside my window. Lydia and the children were gone into the fields, but while Vincent was still here, they returned gaily, coming across the lawn. Lydia came up to the glass-doors to look in upon me. I never saw any one so lovely. The children had taken off her gray close bonnet, and twined wreaths of bright-coloured flowers among her hair, which had fallen about her face and neck. Her dark eyes were lit up with merry, girlish vanity, innocent surely, and her attitude, as she bent forward to peep at me, was one of careless grace. Vincent—you know him!—uttered an exclamation of delight, and sprang to her side, playfully laying his pistol against her flower-crowned head.

"'You are frightened,' he said, 'and well you may be. Your life is completely in my power.'

"'Nay, Vincent,' she answered, 'thou hast only startled me. I thought that Ellen was alone.'

"'Well, I am going to fire,' he said. The trigger clicked, but Lydia's steady eye-lids never quivered as she looked up into his face.

"'Ah! it won't go off!' cried Vincent, striking it against the trellis of the verandah; 'it never missed fire before, and it shall not again.'

"'Again he placed the pistol near to her head, but she struggled to free herself from his grasp this time, and by some chance or other it did go off with a loud report. A bitter, strong cry of anguish followed it; and before me swam an awful vision of our Lydia struck down by so sudden and violent a death. A moment like an eternity passed over us, and then there came the clear, calm, unflinching tones of Lydia's voice.

"'Do not be afraid. Thou hast not hurt me.'

"'Instantly Vincent fell senseless at her feet; and she threw herself

beside him in an abandonment of grief, assuring him piteously that she was unhurt. Caleb stood by, thunder-struck, and unheeding my reiterated orders. At last Vincent rallied.

"'Oh, my darling! my love!' he gasped, as he slowly recovered utterance, 'my little waif, I thought I had killed you—killed the most precious little creature in the world, whom I love as my own soul!'

"'I am not hurt,' she repeated, trying to rise, and withdraw her hands from his grasp.

"'I cannot let you go!' he cried; 'if I lose sight of you for an instant, if you take your hands away, I shall believe that I have killed you. See how my life is bound up with yours!'

"She bent over him till her long hair hid her face, and whispered some few words to him.

"'Ah, Caleb!' said Vincent, raising himself, 'just lend me a hand, old fellow. You never saw me in such earnest as this before, did you?'

"He tried to laugh, but he still trembled violently, and clasped Lydia's hand, as if to assure himself of her safety. After awhile he asked Caleb to drive him home, and Lydia hid herself in her own room, and I have not seen her since.

"Now what is to be done? Vincent's attachment is only an infatuation, for the Colonel never could or would consent to such a marriage for him. Caleb is terribly gloomy about the matter; and I begin to think my father is right. What shall I do with this dangerous young creature? Shall I have her locked up; or chained to the foot of my sofa; or bricked up in a wall; or buried beneath my hearth-stone? Let me know what to do soon."

(Concluded in our next.)



A FEW MONTHS IN LEIPZIG.

I N the early morning, at the commencement of April, 1866, I first entered Leipzig. The clocks stood at five as I alighted from a comfortable carriage; I, cold, uncomfortable, and sleepy from my long night-journey. The gray light which precedes day was spreading over the town, rendering all objects dim and gloomy, and casting a corresponding influence upon the minds of the travellers. An entire stranger to the place, I thought it best to leave my luggage at the station, carrying away with me but a small bag containing immediate necessities.

I stepped from the building into the open air, and looked around for a cab, but no vehicle of any kind was at hand. A few passengers were hurrying away, carrying their own bags and rugs; a party of others were driving away in the only cab or droschke to be seen, and that one appeared to be overcrowded. What to do I knew not. My knowledge of German was but imperfect, and that little was baffled by the rapid utterance of the Saxon railway porters. Upon making known my dilemma, their heads shook ominously. What hotel was I in the habit of visiting? In vain I declared myself a stranger; either they could not or would not understand me. Strangers never came to Leipzig at this season of the year unless they had business to transact. I must do as I had done before. At this moment I caught sight of an empty droschke, and hailed it with a feeling of relief.

I remembered to have heard that the Hotel de Pologne was the best in the town, and desired the man to drive thither. I was too tired to take much notice of the place, and was thankful when the coach stopped at the entrance of a large gray stone building. A few gold letters overhead informed me that it was my desired resting-place. The door was opened by a sleepy porter, who appeared excessively indignant at having been awakened. I demanded a room, was admitted, and the huge door closed behind me with an echo. So far, good. The surly porter lighted a candle, and led the way to a room on the first floor, at the extremity of a long stone corridor. Placing my bag upon a chair, and the light upon the drawers, he left me to peace and solitude. The room was long and narrow; the floor, if my memory serves me rightly, was of stone. Cold and cheerless, for the weather was yet frosty, I crossed over to the bed, wondering if the sheets and blankets were well aired and in good condition; but neither sheets nor blankets did I find. The bed was a cramped, cradle-looking affair; a species of spring-box fitting closely to the wood, appeared to have been dropped into it,

covered tightly over with something white; upon this was thrown a large feather quilt by way of covering; and that was all. I had been told that the beds in Germany were barbarously uncomfortable, but I had never realized the whole truth. Making the best of the matter, I could only trust to weariness for a few hours' sleep, and happily this remedy did not fail me. About ten I awoke somewhat refreshed; washed, dressed, and endeavoured to draw aside the curtains. This I had half succeeded in accomplishing when the huge brass pole came down with a clatter, just escaping my head. I rang the bell and requested to be shown to the breakfast-room. Upon leaving my own room a most extraordinary sight greeted me. The corridor was filled with boxes and bales of goods, and with men who appeared to be there for the express purpose of buying and selling. Every room on the floor, my own only excepted, was turned into a cloth-shop. The sight was so unexpected, so new and strange to me, that I knew not what to think.

Gazing around, I followed my guide down a flight of stairs. The speise-saal or dining-room, was an immense room, gaudily decorated and embellished, at the further end of which was a low platform fitted up as an orchestra. I sat down, but not to peace. Some thirty musicians were scattered about the orchestra-room, practising, playing, each musician essaying a different air. Harps, violins, violincellos, trombones, French-horns; almost every instrument that can be mentioned. How they managed to practice with benefit and satisfaction to themselves, I could not tell; how the men walking about the room, tuning their violins, accomplished their purpose, was a complete mystery. During a short lull, a harp struck up alone, played by a little hump-backed man. I shall never forget the wonderful expression and melody that breathed from its strings; it almost seemed as if the power of his soul was thrown out in melancholy music for his affliction. Very different was the awful discord which soon took the place of its soft sweet notes. I asked an explanation of the waiter, and was told they were getting up their pieces for the evening. Each night during the fair, a concert was held in the room; these musicians formed a small part of the orchestra. More would arrive presently. At once the truth flashed upon me—these inexplicable proceedings were the result of the Fair. I was not ignorant of the existence of the institution, but had not the least idea of its importance and immensity, or, indeed, of its general character. A friend had written to me during my sojourn in Paris, advising me to give him warning of my arrival, should it take place during the fair, in order that he might secure me rooms. But he did not explain its nature, neither did he state the epoch of its reign. I thought little of it, and did not write to him, and hence arose many of the discomforts I was compelled to endure. Certainly here was a good beginning to them. The waiter's announcement that in a short time more musicians would arrive, caused me to swallow down my coffee at scalding heat,

and retire from the field of action. I went back to my room to ponder over the strange scene upon which I had entered, voted it decidedly unpleasant, and resolved that my present quarters should be shifted as swiftly as possible.

My musings were cut short by the entrance of a waiter, bearing a book, in which I was requested to give my name and age. At the same time he informed me that I could not occupy my room after one o'clock. It was let for a cloth shop, had been let for some days; the porter had been guilty of a sleepy mistake in showing me to it. I replied that it was of no consequence; I intended to leave. There is an old saying to the effect that you should not throw away dirty water until you can get clean, and so it proved in this instance.

I sallied forth in the pouring rain, and purchased an umbrella; which by the way at the end of a fortnight had to go back to the maker's for a new stick, new silk, and a new frame. I then proceeded to the Poste Restante for my letters; thence in search of the only friend I possessed in the town. He was, perhaps, the most influential of its inhabitants, and I knew he could help me out of my difficulties if it was in any one's power to do so. After duly indulging his surprise at my sudden appearance, I gave him a list of my grievances. He informed me that during the fair I could not be in a worse place than the Hotel de Pologne. Most of its rooms were turned into cloth shops; it was frequented and crowded by a set of people that rendered it most undesirable to an uncommercial traveller. We went forth together in search of a better lodging, but found none. We visited in turn every hotel in the place; all to no purpose. Not a room could be obtained for love or money.

"I told you to write to me," observed my friend, reproachfully.

"True," I answered, feeling very much as though I deserved my punishment; "but you did not give me a description of your fair. A fair? It seems to me that when it is over you must feel very much as the Egyptians when the children of Israel departed from them."

I had pictured to myself a fair lasting three days; consisting of a few shows and swings, causing no inconvenience and but little excitement. How greatly I reckoned without my host! I found it lasted a month. The squares were all covered with booths, and a great part of the streets also. In these booths goods of all descriptions were sold; almost every article existing under the sun. The town contains about a hundred thousand inhabitants; the fair brings about eighty thousand strangers to the place, who for a whole month require food and lodging. The inhabitants reap a plentiful harvest; hotels and houses are crowded; everything becomes double and treble its usual price; whatever is asked is obtained. People must have rooms; they cannot live without eating; and it is a case of Hobson's choice. Whilst giving the town a harvest, it also forms one of its most unpleasant features. To that class of the inhabitants not in any way benefitted by the fair, it is an uncomfortable

eyesore, as well as a most expensive one. They fly the place and its visitors, many of whom by their dress and appearance may be signalled out as of the lowest cast of Hebrew traders. Leipzig, for the time, becomes a huge mart, in appearance and in fact. The archways, and many of the private houses, are turned into shops. Goods are hung outside the windows, and stretch across the streets, after the fashion of the garlands and glass ornaments on procession days in Roman Catholic towns. The streets are so crowded as to become almost impassable, and assume the appearance of a room uncomfortably full of furniture. A feeling of suffocation comes over you. The town seems to have grown too small for its inhabitants.

It was getting late when my friend and I found ourselves turning our backs upon our last chance. He was obliged to leave me, for he lived at a distance from the town. "You must put up with your present quarters a little longer," was his consoling remark; "in a few days something will turn up." We wished each other good-night, and I turned towards my hotel. Arrived there I announced that I must still occupy my rooms; I could not leave them for a day or two. On their side they informed me that my rooms were already turned into a cloth mart, and my luggage transported somewhere up into the clouds, awaiting my pleasure. I protested that I could not leave them; that they could not turn me into the streets. This was apparent, even to them. The head-waiter said there certainly was a room they could give me, but it was only let out in emergencies, in case of the arrival of a favourite customer. My heart lightened at the information, and I followed him with alacrity. Up the wide staircase, through the fine open corridor, and then—we turned off into a long narrow suffocating passage. At its extreme end he opened a door, and ushered me into the room. It must indeed have been reserved for emergencies. The floor was dirty; the walls stained and paperless; the bed apparently more uncomfortable than the one I had lately occupied. To crown all, it was quite dark at noon. My misery was perfect. I bore with the room, and the musicians, and the cloth-shops, for two whole days, and then felt that my patience had reached a climax. On the third day, I went forth again, and by the evening, with the aid of the "Tageblatt," had found a lodging. It was not grand; it was on the fourth floor; it was but one room; it possessed but one window. But it was clean and light; the air was pure; the street was quiet and respectable, completely away from the fair and its Babel. I closed with it, and returned to the hotel in triumph; paid my bill, which proved enormous; carried off my bag, and went to the station for the remainder of my luggage.

I now began to feel somewhat less of a stranger to the town. I ardently wished for the departure of the fair, so that I might gain breathing room and a change of lodgings. But it was in no hurry to take flight. Its period of duration was a month, and but a week had as yet

expired. During the remainder of the time I had full opportunity to become acquainted with it. I cannot say that familiarity rendered me more reconciled to its presence. It was certainly a strange sight, one that perhaps is to be seen nowhere else in the world. It occurs three times a year, each visit lasting a month. But for these periodical afflictions, Leipzig might be a charming country town. Göthe has compared it to a Paris in miniature; except, he adds, that Leipzig has produced characters, original and of genius, whilst Paris has not. I know not how the French took the compliment. As long as the fair lasted I was unable to trace any likeness between the town and the French capital; rather it appeared to me to resemble the pictures one is apt to draw of Whitechapel on a Saturday night. One part of it was devoted to the shows, which flourished in great number. Whilst walking up and down these streets of shows, you might almost fancy yourself transported into scenes a century or two ago. They were of varied sizes, degrees, and kind. No less than four wonderful ladies were exhibited, without including the caravan containing the smallest living specimen of a grown-up female. Two of the ladies were celebrated for remarkable height; another for exceeding fatness; and the fourth for a marvellous beard. One booth contained a pig, a living specimen of the malady then prevalent among the herd; but as it had remained a whole month apparently in the same condition, its case must have been of a peculiar and exceptional type.

As the fair crowded the town with strangers, the tables d'hôte were necessarily flourishing; but the dinners decreased in quality as they increased in quantity. It was not an unusual thing to sit down a party of a hundred and fifty. The loud tones of voice which characterize these people, were not subdued during the meal, and the Babel was deafening. German manners are peculiar. In some respects they may be the most polished and refined nation in the world; but in others they are the exact opposite. Combs were in frequent requisition at the commencement of dinner: even amongst those who were considered the leading gentlemen of the place, it was a daily practice for them to walk over to one of the mirrors and comb their hair and moustaches. The ladies made no exception. Upon one occasion one went so far as to pull her hair completely down before the assembly and rearrange it.

With no small feeling of thankfulness I found the time drawing near when booths, shows, and strangers must depart. One morning we woke up to find ourselves happy—of more consequence to us, just then, than fame. During the night an immense cavalcade had taken wing. The town breathed again. Down came the deserted shows with a crash; up flew clouds of dust—and fleas; out rushed the inhabitants, joy in their hearts, smiles on their faces. In a week the nuisance was forgotten, and the town resumed its natural appearance. No one would

have recognized it as the same. Streets widened, squares expanded; public buildings and fine houses sprang up as if by magic; hitherto they had been smothered and concealed. The town no longer appeared too small for its inhabitants. Prices fell; lodgings became vacant; my own was speedily changed for one in all points admirable. We could now eat our dinners in peace; instead of a hundred and fifty at table, we often numbered less than twenty. The host would march round with a word to one, a bow to another of his guests. The waiters ceased to look so very much like overtaxed ghosts. We certainly had to put up with the booksellers' fair; but that lasted a few days only and was gone. Yet though so soon over, it is a fair of great importance. Booksellers and publishers assemble at Leipzig from all parts of Europe. The meeting takes place once a year, when the accounts of the preceding year are balanced and settled. It is an anxious week. The publishers have not a moment to themselves; some work night and day to keep pace with time. Those who do not come forward at this great rendezvous, are considered disgraced and hors de combat. Publishing is the trade of Leipzig, par excellence, and it contains many firms of note. That of Brockhaus and Co. employs eight hundred hands; during the time of war and rumours of war, it discharged many of them, and the unhappy men were left to their own resources.

The fair having departed, I was able to see Leipzig in its true colours. It possesses many points of interest. It has its university, and its conservatorium for music. Each German university shines prominently forth in one certain branch of science and study. The great point of Leipzig's university is law, for which it possesses eminent professors. It is also strong in theology. For an university town it is quiet. Unlike Heidelberg, duels are sternly forbidden, and seldom occur; therefore, equally unlike that town, it is an unusual thing to see students walking about with faces covered with gashes and sword-cuts. Leipzig's crowning feature of attraction is its music. The conservatorium is excellent; its masters are some of the best in the world. The academy is founded on a perfect system. Music, harmony, composition, singing are all taught; of each branch several lessons a week are given, and the cost is twelve pounds a year per pupil. The style is first rate. The Germans must have been born a musical nation, for they seem to possess it innately. In almost all houses you hear pianos at work, more or less well played. Students from all parts of Germany come to the Conservatorium of Leipzig; many from England: some even from America. Throughout the winter months a concert, always crowded, is given every Thursday night in the large room of the Gewand-Haus, and it is one of the greatest musical treats in the world. Nothing better can be heard in the shape of instrumental music. Years ago Mendelssohn was their director. I often wonder what those days must have been, when he played his own compositions to an enraptured

audience. Many in Leipzig remember them, and talk of them as of some great treat which has passed for ever.

As a nation the Germans are persevering and industrious, and possess many excellent characteristics. Less impulsive and demonstrative than the French, they are more sincere. But they are happily less reserved than the English; wisely observing amongst themselves the rules of social and friendly intercourse.

The people are primitive in their ways and habits. The usual hour for breakfast is seven; some take it still earlier; the dinner-hour varies between twelve and one; supper is taken at seven or eight o'clock. They live very simply; too much so for most Englishmen; and, like the French, they cannot dine without soup. At six o'clock, morning and evening, it is the practice of many to resort to the "milk gardens." They enter the cow-shed, have the animal milked before them, and retire to an arbour or tent to enjoy at leisure the frothy luxury. In May their popular drink is called Maitrank; it is made of white Rhine-wine, sugar, and orange, into which is steeped the herb known to us as woodruff, but which they call waldmeister. I remember one afternoon going into the Börsen-Halle, the only news-room where we English could get a look at the "Times," and requesting a glass to be brought to me. It had been an intensely hot day, one of the hottest I had ever experienced. I entered the room feeling my blood to be about up to fever-heat. The iced maitrank was brought to me, and I drank it off; in less than five minutes I was perfectly cool, nor did I get warm again until the next day. It was perhaps an unwise thing to do, but I felt no ill effects from it. The Börsen-Halle brings to my mind the English panic, which created much excitement among the Germans, and to so many was the cause of failure. Just at that time the tranquillity of Europe appeared to be trembling in the balance. Their own fate was uncertain. One hour the telegrams announced peace; the next war. Never has it been my lot to see day after day so many anxious, careworn faces. Never were people more tried by conflicting rumours. I could now understand much of the conversation around me, but my great treat was to get hold of Germans who could speak French, and hear them hold forth, with their peculiar accent, upon the state of affairs at home and abroad. England often did not escape her share of evil prophecies, but, with many other kingdoms, had her future position foretold.

The inhabitants are proud of their town, and not unreasonably so. The chief attraction of the museum is a portrait of the first Napoleon by Paul Delaroche. The French have offered a fabulous sum for the picture, but the Saxons will not part with it. They have just built a new theatre, and it is to be hoped they will also build a new concert-house. The room of the Gewand-Haus, in which the winter concerts are held, is the only drawback to the whole thing. Whilst there, it was

my good fortune to hear Wachtel, who is considered the first tenor in Germany. He was originally a cab-driver in Hamburg, to which fact he is no doubt indebted for the admirable manner in which he cracks the whip in the "Postillon de Longumeau." It pleased the Germans wonderfully; especially when, after the first act, he is heard repeating the crack behind the curtain. They have an excellent plan of managing the light. As soon as the curtain rises, the gas is lowered to a subdued tone, while the footlights are turned on to the full. By this means the house is kept cool, the eyesight from fatigue, and much greater effect is given to the stage. At the end of each act the gas is again turned up, and the house has leisure to survey itself ad libitum. The town contains many monuments erected to famous men. Hahnemann is conspicuous. In Gohlis, a village close to Leipzig, there stands a small cottage, containing about four rooms. It bears an inscription intimating that Schiller lived there many years. It is a poor little place; but there he struggled with poverty, wrote some of his finest things, and enjoyed the companionship of his beloved Charlotte. Near the entrance to the Rosenthal a beautiful monument in white marble is erected to the memory of Gellert, a poet much loved by them for the beauty of his thoughts, and the simplicity and integrity of his heart. Nor do they forget their own immediate relations who have died. On the twenty-fourth of June all who have friends or relatives in the churchyard, rise up early in the morning, wend their way to the cemetery, and cover the graves belonging to them with flowers. These little things prove them to be a warm-hearted people. In one particular the young men resemble the French: in the love and respect they bear their parents, more especially their mothers. It is a characteristic not prevalent amongst the English; one they would do well to imitate.

The country round about Leipzig is very flat and woody; but many of the walks are charming, and the rides on horseback delightful. The only time for riding was the early morning, as early as four or five o'clock, before the heat of the day came on. I shall not easily forget one of these rides taken in company with a German. We had lost ourselves in the wood, and could find no exit. After a lapse of some hours we reached a spot which promised us freedom; but a wide brook lay before us, running between two steep banks. Our horses, frightened at the water, would not move. My companion dismounted and endeavoured to lead his horse forward; but it capered and snorted, and refused to obey. After much coaxing I persuaded mine to go through, and the other one then followed. We soon found ourselves in a village some distance from Leipzig, and had frequently to inquire our way. The people were extremely civil, and appeared glad to see us depart. My companion privately informed me that we were taken for Prussian officers in disguise. Leipzig was at this time in possession of the enemy, a fact which sufficiently accounts for their error.

Leipzig has its drawbacks as well as its attractions. Amongst them are the sand-storms. It is always a dusty place; but at times clouds of dust and sand arise, which completely shut out from view all surrounding objects. Turn your back which way you will, you still seem to face it; and you often go home looking as though you had spent some hours in a flour mill. The air is dry and relaxing, for the town is two hundred miles away from the sea. In summer the heat is unbearable; in winter the cold is intense. They take active measures for warming their rooms. As in Paris, few people possess a house to themselves; each family occupies a floor or flat. Shut in from the staircase, every opportunity for heating is afforded. Double windows are fixed in, and every breath of air is excluded. In each room stands a stove some eight feet high, throwing out great heat. In summer the double windows are removed; the single ones are opened, and gauze blinds substituted. This precaution is taken against the insects which abound—wasps, bees, hornets, and others. Most of the horses have bags over their ears, or the insects might enter them and render them furious. Straw hats become the fashion, and are made of a size sufficiently sensible, to shield the wearer from the heat and glare of the sun.

Take it for all in all Leipzig is a favoured place. It possesses not the beauties of Hiedelberg, or the waters of Baden, or the gallery of Dresden: it is not a place which has its crowded season of fashion, and its periods of repose, except at fair times the number of its inhabitants does not greatly vary: but I think few will pass six months within it—especially the winter months—without bidding it farewell with regret. Those who go there with introductions to its inhabitants will find them hospitable and warm-hearted. But if you do not love music, keep away. Music abounds; it is a constant theme of conversation; it is heard in every house, gushing forth through open windows; heard in the whispering of the trees, and in the cold ripple of the fountain. He who does not love it, is looked upon as possessing neither heart nor feeling. For all these reasons, any one so constituted would be better away; he would soon grow to hate it; and he might be taking up the place of one upon whom all these riches would not be wasted. But to those who love music in its best form, a winter's sojourn in Leipzig will prove a pleasure of which they can have very little conception until it has been experienced.

BURIED ALONE.

BY A NEW WRITER.

CHAPTER I.

THE CATHEDRAL SINGER.

EVENING Service was near its conclusion in one of the most celebrated cathedrals of France. A voice, whose clear and pure tones had been rarely equalled, was echoing through the magnificent building. The last notes died away; the *dévôtes* turned their chairs; a few moments later, they had risen, and were flocking out.

Almost the last to remain in the sacred edifice was a woman past the meridian of life. Her face was peculiar, and bore a firm though benevolent expression. Hard lines indented the brow, and a sad light subdued the eyes, telling that life had brought her its full share of trouble. She was evidently waiting for some one in the cathedral. A step was heard descending the narrow, dark staircase of the organ-loft, and the woman smiled as a fair young girl issued from the low arched doorway.

She was very beautiful. A pale face, with soft, dark-blue eyes; a broad white forehead, surmounted by rich brown hair, whose braids rested in the most perfect order and neatness. A Madonna-like face, heightened, by the power of life, into beauty greater than any ever realized upon canvas. In repose, her face was quiet, but when speaking, it lighted up to almost a startling degree. She was of middle height, exquisitely formed; and as her small feet lightly descended the clumsy stone steps, the woman shook her head proudly, and thought that stairs, organ-loft, even the edifice itself, apart from its religion, the worship to which it was devoted, were honoured by the presence of the young girl.

She joined the woman, and they passed out together, traversing the streets quietly, and, for the first few moments, in silence. That they were servant and young mistress might be told at a glance.

"Ah, mademoiselle!" the woman began, "I have heard you sing this many a day, but I think you sing with more grandeur and power each time I hear you. I could listen to you for ever; it is about the only pleasure I get now. You do not know the great gift you possess—how should you? but I——"

"Mariette," interrupted the young lady, her tone impatient, "what do I care this evening for my singing, wonderful as you may think it?"

Let it pass for now. Don't you know that I am waiting to hear of my father? Can't you see I am on thorns until you speak?"

"He has slept, mademoiselle; he slept for an hour; but it was only the effect of the draught, and the sleep did not refresh him. When he awoke he asked for you. I told him you could not be home until service was over; and then he grew excited, and insisted upon my seeking you at once. I came away to pacify him; and I've been there in the cathedral, listening to you."

"And saying your prayers, I hope," put in the young lady, who rather liked to domineer over her attendant.

"But yes. I am a good Catholic. I said 'em between whiles, when your voice was still."

"So that papa's insistency did you some good, you see, Mariette. I don't think you have been into a church once since he was ill."

"One can't go gadding out when one has duties to keep one at home, mademoiselle. Monsieur ought not to be left. It's only since three days that garde malade has been with us. And a fine garde *she* is!" added the woman, in an acmé of disparagement. "Asleep half her time. Mademoiselle has no cause to be finding fault."

"Ah, Mariette! don't you know I was only joking? My good Mariette! Papa and I and the ménage could never get along without you. I wish he would get well!"

"It's easy enough to wish it," cried Mariette; and there was something in the tone that struck on the young girl's senses as if a chill had fallen. She turned her bright face and her blue eyes questioningly on the woman.

"Do you fear he will not get well soon?"

"I fear this, mademoiselle: that he is worse than we imagine, or the doctor will admit."

"But why do you fear this?" she asked, after a pause.

"Well, for one thing, that blessed garde of ours says so. And I have got the use of my own senses, mademoiselle."

"But you don't think he is in *danger*? Mariette! you must tell me the truth now."

"I'd not tell it, but that I have been saying to myself these two days that it ought to be told—that mademoiselle might blame me for it afterwards."

"Afterwards?"

They looked at each other; the hard but kindly woman, and the fair young inexperienced girl. Accustomed to read each other's faces, she—the latter—could not mistake what was in the woman's.

"Oh, Mariette! don't say it! What should I do? What should I do?"

"Now, Mademoiselle Lucie, there you go!" cried Mariette, in reproof, willing possibly to try and reverse what she had implied. "How can

I tell that it will be, child? But it is well in all cases to look at the worst."

"I should be alone in the world. In this great world!—amidst all this crowd of people. Without a relative to look up to; a friend to lean upon; a counsellor to advise me; I, who am so young and foolish——"

"Not foolish," interrupted Mariette, indignantly. "And as to being left alone, that can never happen as long as I live. I am but a servant, Mademoiselle Lucie; I am very poor, for I've saved nothing——"

"There it is," interrupted Lucie, in excitement, taking in all the bearings of a future vista, as she was apt to do whether in gaiety or happiness. "You are poor and I am poor. I *should* be, Mariette; all papa enjoys dies with him."

"As if I did not know that," retorted Mariette. "I can work; mademoiselle must please remember that. And if anything should happen, why it would be my place then to keep mademoiselle by my work. Mademoiselle has no relatives; she'd belong then to her poor old servant, and to nobody else in the wide world."

Lucie looked at the faithful woman with a sad smile, and walked on in silence. The shadow of an approaching sorrow—the first she had ever known—lay already on her spirit. A father is a father. Lucie Martin had not loved hers very much: but she had at least rendered him all duty and obedience. He had ever been cold to her: as a little child she could scarcely remember that he had kissed her: and all her days until recently had been spent at school. Monsieur Martin had come to this French city years and years ago; a Polish exile; an evident gentleman, and speaking many languages; but never saying who he was or what he was. Courteous to all, there was a dignified reserve about him that could not be penetrated; and not the most garrulous Frenchman at the Grand Café ventured to ask him whether Martin was a Polish name. He had an annuity; nobody knew how much or how little; and he taught languages at the college.

A silent, half-solitary life he led in private: kind to Lucie, but never demonstrative in his affection for her. While she was growing up, their chief meetings were on Sunday. On week-days the girl was taken to school by Mariette before eight in the morning, after the custom in some parts of France, and fetched home by her after eight at night. The singular power and beauty of her voice had attracted attention; and when she left school her old music-master caused her to become a singer in the cathedral, of which he was organist.

Thus—the fear suddenly presented to her of losing her father did not bring all the grief to her that it would to some daughters; but it brought enough. She had no relatives whatever, as far as she knew. She had only her father to protect and shelter her, to provide her with the necessaries of life. Left alone, she would have to battle with the

world as she best might ; and she trembled as she thought of the trials and temptations, the struggles and difficulties she would probably have to encounter. They presented themselves to her view this evening in a rather remarkable manner. Already she seemed to realize what it was to be an orphan. She would have given worlds to possess a sister or a brother—some one to love and confide in, who would care for her, share all her sorrows or her prosperity. She shrank from the unknown future, from the dark curtain slowly unfolding itself minute by minute, to the panorama that must lie beyond. As the sun sinks behind the hills, carrying away with it presently its golden clouds, and leaves the world to night and darkness, so seemed to be sinking the early sun of her young life.

They bore on rapidly through the streets and the busy crowd traversing them, and entered at length a wide but very quiet thoroughfare : trees on the one side, a row of tall, sombre-looking dwellings on the other. In one of these houses M. Martin occupied a floor, or flat. The Polish exile had taken it furnished when he first came to the town ; and he lived in it still. It lay convenient to the college and to the school of Lucie. People wondered, after the manner of the wondering world, that M. Martin had never bought his own furniture. "Paying through the nose, you see, *mes amis*, for what he sits upon !"

"Here we are, *mademoiselle*. And I hope we shall find *monsieur*, your father, better !"

Ascending the common staircase to the second floor, Mariette opened the door with a latch-key. A small passage, a kitchen, a sitting-room, and three bed-rooms beyond, comprised the apartments. The rooms were unpretending ; the furniture (that the neighbours grumbled over) was inexpensive and worn ; but all partook of that marvellous cleanliness and neatness so often seen in French houses. Carpetless floors were polished (or painted) to the complexion of mahogany ; imitation marble mantel-pieces held vases of bright flowers.

Lucie Martin threw off her bonnet and mantle, disclosing a slender and very graceful shape. She wore a dress of some soft kind, its colour a blue-gray. Not of her dress, however, was she thinking, but of one who was lying in one of those further rooms waiting for her. With a push of her rich and soft brown hair on either side her face, she passed through the sitting-room to her father's chamber. It was of tolerable size, but of angular shape ; the furniture of imitation deal, the floor painted, the covering cloths on the drawers, and else, of white damask ; the whole clean and nice. In the angle of the room a stout woman slept in a chair.

Lying in the bed at the side opposite the fire, was the invalid, Jean Martin. Its drapery, coverlid, pillows, were of snowy whiteness ; Mariette would change things, even when people were in health, before anybody else could see a soil upon them ; and perhaps this whiteness

only served to render more conspicuous that of the face of the dying man. In his sunken eyes and hollow cheeks, in the blue tinge that the complexion was taking, in the slow and laboured breathing, a spectator accustomed to the sick in extremity, might easily have seen that his days, perhaps his hours, were numbered. He must once have been very handsome; the features were fine yet, but fever had wasted his strength and beauty. The face was careworn, the eyes had an anxious look, as if seeking for relief from some inward sorrow. But for a troubled mind there is not always healing balm to be found; earthly physicians do not keep it.

As soon as M. Martin caught sight of Lucie, a wan smile lit up his faded countenance. He held out his hand with an eager gesture; a hand so white and wasted that you might trace each small blue vein beneath the surface. Lucie advanced and took it gently. Hesitating and blushing, she bent and kissed the pale cheek of the sick man, with difficulty keeping down the lump that emotion was causing to rise to her throat. These tokens of affection were not of every-day occurrence in the household; Lucie could not remember ever to have voluntarily given one. Then she stood calm and quiet, for they had been warned that excitement of any kind would be exceedingly prejudicial.

"I am glad you are come, child," he remarked, addressing her in perfect English: the language mostly used between them.

"I could not get away sooner, papa. I would not leave you a moment if I were my own mistress. But you know the cathedral services are exacting. Are you better this evening?"

"I shall never be better, Lucie. It is impossible to keep the truth from you any longer. I made the doctor confess this afternoon that it would not be long; '*Quelques jours encore*,' he said. Then I lay and thought, and saw it was my duty to tell you, painful though it might be to you to hear it. But so it is, child. A few days, and I shall be no more. Before Courtoit came I had been feeling that a few hours might see the last of me; and I grew impatient and sent Mariette. But I feel easier now."

She had begun to sob aloud; for a few moments could not at all restrain her grief. "Papa, don't say so. It cannot be true. It is too sudden."

"Ay, child. The end generally *is* sudden; or seems so."

"Oh! papa, try and live! Don't leave me. I shall be alone in the world; without a father, without a friend; without a home."

The words seemed to excite M. Martin in a manner wholly unaccountable. He rose up in bed, speaking with a shrill sharp cry.

"Don't remind me of it. Alone in the world! Who says it? If you talk of it you will kill me."

Lucie stood aghast; the nurse started in fright from her slumbers. She overturned the chauffeurette on which her feet rested: its braize,

luckily, had gone cold and dead. But this was not all: in her hasty and clumsy efforts to get to the bed, she threw down a polished wooden crucifix that lay on the table.

"Monsieur, how you startled me. Has the time come for the tisane? My poor head ached; and I suppose I had dropped into a doze."

But the falling of the crucifix seemed to have completed the excitement of M. Martin. He stretched out both his hands for it; he gasped for breath; he stared at it with covetous eyes. Lucie ran and brought it to him.

"Keep it," he panted, pushing it back into her hands. "Keep it, keep it always, Lucie! promise me that you will! Make me your promise upon it."

She bowed her head. "My dear father, I will never part with it; I make my promise sacredly."

"But, monsieur, you know you are not to talk," interposed the nurse, who felt very cross.

"You go away for awhile," responded M. Martin. "Mademoiselle will stay with me."

"Go away! But, monsieur, the doctor made me responsible for your tranquillity. He said that I was to see that you did not talk."

"Leave the room, I say," said the sick man, peremptorily, "and allow me and the doctor to settle my affairs between us. Go."

Possibly judging that opposition might be worse than compliance, possibly not sorry to escape to the kitchen for a gossip with Mariette, the nurse departed. M. Martin lay back, recovering breath and calmness; and Lucie stood with wet eyes, one hand on the pretty crucifix which now rested on the bed.

"Lucie," he presently began, "if I am really dying—and there's no doubt of it—the time has arrived for my soul to be unburdened of a secret. For several years now, it has weighed me down like a frightful nightmare. I should have disclosed it before; ay, long ago; but for my vow. I took *that* in my passion, you see, child; a vow never to confess until I should lie a-dying."

In her astonishment, Lucie's tears dried up, and her voice was still. But for the light in her father's eyes and the distress of his face, she would have supposed his mind was wandering.

"Papa, will you have a priest called?"

"No. The confession I have to make is to you. I dread the task: dread it, Lucie. For it will turn all the love you possess for me into hatred; your words of kindness will change to accusations of reproach."

"Oh, papa; you know that it is not possible," she said, beginning to think that he really must be dreaming.

"Sit you down there, and listen; and then you will see whether it is possible. Sit down, I say, Lucie; and do not attempt to interrupt me."

She sat down on the chair to which he pointed ; it was close to the bed, and she could easily watch her father's countenance. Waiting in silence, she marvelled what he was going to say ; whether it might not be a fairy tale, such as a child tells. It might be that his mind had gone back to childhood again.

"I am called a Polish exile ; I have called myself one ; but I never was in Poland in my life. My father was a Pole, his ancestors were noblemen, but he, exiled, lived in Paris. He married an English lady, Miss Sarah Martin. She was governess in a Russian nobleman's family, but it was folly in them to marry, for they were both poor. But they did pretty well ; they got good teaching ; he in languages, she in accomplishments ; and they made a happy home for themselves and me, their only child. Ah ! they loved me too well ; for it prevented their exercising over me that severe authority that boys of a wilful nature require. I was wilful : a keen, clever, wilful boy ; idle, careless, fond of pleasure. At the age of seventeen I lost my mother. This seemed to be the signal for me to throw off all restraint ; I began to run riot, and fell into some disgrace. My father's death, some three years afterwards, sobered me for a short time. Not altogether from grief, but because I must now make my own way in the world, or starve. I did try ; I tried honestly, Lucie ; but I had been idle too long : and I was too much of a gentleman, or considered so, to take to hard labour. Things came to a crisis with me : I had no friends to borrow of ; I had not a franc in the world. Accident introduced me to an English gentleman then staying in Paris. He was in search of a confidential attendant ; a valet, in short ; and I applied to him for the place."

Lucie gave vent to an exclamation of incredulity and dismay. With all her gentleness she possessed a great deal of innate pride. M. Martin turned his eyes upon her for a moment.

"Yes, it's true ; a valet. But wait. I gained the place ; an acquaintance gave me a reference, and the gentleman took it. He was the second son of an English peer. He took a fancy to me ; a handsome young fellow of twenty-two was I in those days, with manners and diction as good as his own. One day he said to me that he thought I could not have been brought up to service ; but I evaded the question. My mother had been well educated, I said, a poor governess ; and so passed the subject off. As time went on, and I knew more of my master, I liked him ; he was kind and liberal—at least as long as I implicitly obeyed him. But he would not endure the slightest contradiction. Once or twice he stamped and swore at me like a madman, for not obeying some trifling command."

"And you stayed on?"

"I stayed on. The life was an easy one, and my pride had been got over at the first onset ; besides, I had no other means of living. When I had been with my master some six months, I made a discovery—he

was a married man. He had married, some few years before, a beautiful and gentle English girl, his superior in all things except rank. She loved him, and though he returned her affection in his own way, they were ill-matched. She was of too refined a nature to bear continually with his rough and harsh ways, and the strain told upon her. But she did not die, or fall into a wasting sickness, or anything of that sort; she only became a meek-spirited woman, going about the house like a shadow, starting at the mere banging of a door. All these details I learnt later. She was in England; he had been away from it for twelve months at least; there was no separation, only a coolness. But it pleased him now to go home again, and I went with him. The marriage had offended my master's family, for she was not his equal, and they had lived at a small estate in Hertfordshire, inherited from his uncle.

"*He* called it small. I thought it large and very beautiful. There were two children, I found; a boy aged four or five; a girl of one year old. Sweet, sweet children, both! My master had not before seen his little girl, and he grew to love her as the apple of his eye."

"But you do not tell me the gentleman's name, papa."

"You will hear it when I am dead; not before," was M. Martin's answer; and Lucie felt frightened, she knew not why, as he gave it. "Let me go on, or we shall have *Courtoit* here. In attendance on my master's wife—partly companion, partly maid—was a charming young French girl, Elise Delrue. Not of these things do I care to talk much to you, Lucie, but it is necessary to say that I grew to love her. Ah, how I loved her! Even now, as I look back, the remembrance of it seems to bring back to me strength and life. Never was love more pure and passionate than mine; never was love more ill-fated. I wish now I had never seen her; never known her; but she made the light of my existence then. As we were both French, we were naturally much together, seeking each other's society often: and I was proud to take care of her. Although I confess to having served as a valet, Lucie, I never lost my instincts as a gentleman. Well, the months went on; I had spoken to Elise, and I then spoke to my master, saying I should soon wish to leave, as I was to marry Elise. 'Not yet, Jean, not yet,' he said in answer. 'My wife could not yet spare Elise; and later perhaps I may be able to help you.' My plan was to set up in London as a teacher of languages; or get an out-door mastership in a public college—as I did here afterwards. But I did not tell him this; I am naturally silent; and instinct told me that he might say a valet could not enter as master in a college.

"We were contented to wait; both I and Elise, for we were both young. After that, the house came to be filled with guests, one of whom was my master's brother. He was the elder by several years, handsome but eccentric, and a bachelor. He must have been smitten with

Elise from the first, though I did not then know it; did not find it out until some mischief had been committed, for he was turning her head with his fine sayings. 'Why do you listen to him?' I said to her. She answered, laughing, that it was no harm. It went on and on. Every guest had left the house long before, except my master's brother; he stopped to laugh and talk with Elise. I grew angry; I demanded of my master that he should interfere, and he said he would. I supposed he did, for the next day his brother left. 'Are you satisfied now?' asked my master, and I told him I was. The following week he despatched me on a mission to Paris. I got back in ten days, and found Elise gone. The man had come back to the house when I left it, and before I returned they had quitted it together."

"To be married?" asked Lucie, innocently.

"No."

"What then, papa?"

"What then?—nothing!"

"But that must have been all wrong?"

"As you gain experience of the world, Lucie, you will find that there is nearly as much wrong as right in it. Let me go on. I cannot speak to you of my feelings; I was in a fury of despair. I wished I might die. Had I been of a cruel nature, I should have killed my master. Yes, my master; he had been as great a serpent as the other. His brother used to lend him money, and so he shut his eyes to things. 'You sent me to Paris on purpose that he might return,' I said to him. 'And what if I did?' retorted my master; 'I should rather put you out of the house than my brother, and the pair of you were making too much noise in it. As to Elise——' 'Yes,' I furiously interrupted, 'as to Elise?' 'Well, I did not send her,' he coolly said; 'if she chose to go out of her own accord, it was no fault of mine.'"

Monsieur Martin put his hands across his eyes and paused, agitated even yet. Lucie, guileless and inexperienced, only half comprehended what had been said.

"I quitted the service. From that hour, my mind was given to revenge. My master had blighted my existence; I would blight his. Had he acted the part he ought, held his brother at defiance, and protected Elise, the misery could not have happened. I thought I was justified then; I think so at times now. The little daughter of the house was grown to be two years old. My master was passionately fond of her. She was the light and pride of his manhood. He would almost have sacrificed his life to benefit her. I knew that the loss of this child would be to him an irreparable misfortune; that he would sooner sacrifice his wife, his son, his wealth, anything else in fact that he owned. His love for the child was strange, considering her youth and his harsh nature. Here lay my means of revenge. My master and his wife went from home upon a few days' visit. I heard of this, and

found my opportunity had come. Stealing down to the neighbourhood, I made use of it. He returned to find his nest robbed of its dearest treasure."

"You took away the little girl!" cried Lucie, breathlessly. "Oh, papa! What did you do with her?"

"Well, there my revenge ended, Lucie. I had learnt to love the dear little baby too well myself to harm her; and I had her tended as my own. Some money was left me about that time; I put it out to interest, and stayed in Switzerland; a few years later, when I thought the search after the child had ceased, I came here, I and my little daughter, and got a professorship in the college."

"And where is the other little girl?"

"Here. There is but one. That little girl was you, Lucie."

In spite of precaution, a cry broke from her lips. The conclusion was totally unexpected. M. Martin, kept up by the necessity of confessing, fell back on his pillow exhausted, now that the task was over.

As the subject had increased in interest, Lucie grew somewhat excited. It had been a bitter revelation to her from the first; her father seemed to have fallen from the high pedestal of honour and worth on which she had been wont to regard him. Hiding her face in her hands, she remained motionless for some time. Presently she raised it again, white and cold.

"Then you are not really my father—my own true father, from whom none, not even the law, could separate me?"

"I am not, Lucie. But I have in a measure done my duty by you. When your father and mother claim you, tell them so. I have educated you well, have taught you to speak English as your native tongue; I have brought you up in the Protestant faith. You have been guarded from every ill, shielded, sheltered; you have not soiled your hands with work. As to that singing in the cathedral, it is your master's doing and yours, a pleasant pastime. And I have loved you, Lucie; I love you dearly; as dearly as though you were in truth my own child; though perhaps I have not shown it. I am naturally undemonstrative; and when that awful blow fell upon me, my heart closed to tenderness. Lucie, do not forsake me in my dying hour."

For answer she threw her arms round his neck and kissed his forehead, her hot tears falling on it.

"Papa, the love of a lifetime could not die away so quickly. If you are not my father, I can only look upon you as such. Who *is* my father?"

"Spare me that question and further details, Lucie. I have written down all particulars; made, in fact, a full confession: every point necessary to establish your birth and identification. Read it to yourself when I am gone: and then forward it to your parents. They are still living. My revenge is over. In the grave all things are forgotten. I

forgive all, as freely as I hope to be forgiven at the last great day. After his loss your father became an altered man, I might almost say an old one. He caused every possible inquiry to be instituted, but my plans had been too carefully laid. I went into the midst of a great town and changed my name. Afterwards I came here, as I tell you. Once your father passed through this place; we almost touched each other, and I had you with me; but his head was bent, and the danger passed."

"Where have you put the letter?"

"I had not forgotten. It is in a safe place, Lucie. After my death you will find it——"

What he would have said never came. At this moment the door opened, the nurse rushed in, and began to shake up the pillow with some vehemence.

"Ah!" she cried as soon as she caught sight of her patient, "you have been talking. I see it by your looks. Here's Dr. Courtoit. My faith! and you in this state. I had gone down to the door and saw him coming along the street. Ciel! how I flew up those miserable stairs. And here you are in a fever, monsieur! and I shall lose his connection, which is so valuable! and—here he is!"

Dr. Courtoit came in. He looked at his patient, felt his pulse, and began to scold.

"It is all the fault of mademoiselle," spoke up the nurse, in self-defence. "Monsieur sent me from the room; he knows he did; and said she was to stay in it."

"Then I shall banish you from it at once, Mademoiselle Lucie," said the doctor. "Unless your papa can have perfect quiet, I will not answer for the consequences. You must please leave it now."

Lucie was too good a daughter to hesitate. She was turning away when M. Martin called her and drew her face down to kiss it.

"You forgive me, don't you, Lucie?" he whispered.

"Oh, papa, dear papa, yes," she said, tenderly, her eyes filling with tears. "Try and get well for my sake."

"And now," said the doctor when he had administered some cordial, "I shall sit here for half an hour, and see that you have quiet. Perhaps you'll get to sleep."

It was even so. With the quiet of the room, sleep fell on the eyes of the invalid. Dr. Courtoit stole out later, telling them not to go in yet; nurse was there; and monsieur was in a sweet sleep.

Nurse fell into a sweet sleep too. At ten o'clock Mariette crept in with a light. All was still around the bed. Lucie bent to look, and started away with a faint cry.

The shadow of death had entered the chamber and rendered it sacred.

(*To be continued.*)

OUR LOG-BOOK.

"WHAT is nearest us touches us most," said Dr. Johnson to Mrs. Thrale, in his usual dogmatic fashion. The good doctor here seemed to give little vantage for the idealizing process of art. And it is probable enough that had his reverent auditor been moved to make representations as to the peculiar fascination which Masters Dryden and Pope had thrown around classical themes and studies, and which still reigned supreme in that later day, he would have said, "Madam, they bring classic times *near*; when smug waiter Will at the 'Mitre' makes a witty retort, Thersites is at my elbow." That which is *nearest us* is what is related to us by many links of sympathy. This implies reality, and the reality of fact only lives as it is involved in the ideality of coincidence—in other words, in the emotional truthfulness which makes it familiar to all. Now these remarks properly raise the old question as to how far fiction is justified in taking a real historical or biographical base. How far can real characters and real events be themselves wrought into the sequence of ideal conceptions?—or, to put it differently, is fact or spirit really *nearest us*? In a sense, of course, all fiction is historical, in the very measure that it penetrates into, and reveals the inner spirit of, the times in which it was produced. But separate traits, details, and facts, so far as they are identifiable and can be traced to real individuals, are nothing else than excrescences. For it is a law in art that that which is of the individual artist is the first to perish; and in these excrescences, by the very necessity of the case, he expresses himself more than humanity. Hence it is, perhaps, that our greatest creators were not *inventors*, but men who seemed to delight in working on the common elements of story, legend, and belief, in which they constantly seemed to lose themselves, as in the absorbed interest and humble simplicity of little children. Mr. MacDonald, it is clear, has, in "Robert Falconer," wrought from a biographical base. It is beautiful, but with the panting, hectic beauty which pertains, not to childhood, but to self-conscious, distracted maidenhood. And notwithstanding all Mr. MacDonald's supreme artistic or inventive skill, we have here two lines which from first to last exclude each other, and will not unite. Mr. MacDonald is a cross between a mystic and a romancer, and the romance element in him will always be uppermost. The characters divide themselves into two distinct groups. The first comprises Mrs. Falconer—the stern Calvinist, for whose goodness the author constantly apologizes, as though, on his theory, it had no

right to be there, and being there is the best refutation possible of his theological doctrines, which he ceaselessly preaches all through the book ; Robert, her grandson, the *douce* reserved boy and devoted man, whose life is mainly coloured by the fate of his father in the light of Calvinistic doctrine ; Betty, the faithful old domestic ; the Lammies, old-fashioned farmers ; and the frequenters of the Aberdeenshire village inn, and its inmates. These are real characters, burned in, as though in daguerreotype ; and we fear they will only be fully appreciated by those who know, from long experience, and in minute detail, the environment and local habitation in which the originals move. For it is a point which those who loosely compare Mr. MacDonald with Scott would do well to notice, that Mr. MacDonald intensifies locality of dialect, of custom, and of type, whenever he tries to paint Scotch character of a commanding type. Notwithstanding his wonderful fancy and his invention, here he seems to recollect and to slowly photograph rather than create. The result is, that where Scott nationalizes and makes generic, he localizes and individualizes. We have no knowledge whatever of the matter ; but we should not be surprised were we told that the originals of the more real of Mr. MacDonald's characters could be pointed out in their native neighbourhood. Is Grocer Bruce still above ground, as a Brown, an Allan, or a Milne ? Is Mrs. Falconer still living her noble life, and praying those simple prayers which Mr. MacDonald has somewhat irreverently tintured with caricature ? It may be so ; but regarding the next series of characters, there is no need to put such a question. They never existed anywhere out of Mr. MacDonald's fancy : they are pure inventions. Miss St. John is a lady of romance, *pur et simple*, and Eric Ericson is about as impossible. Mysie Lyndsay has neither brain nor will—a dish of milk-and-water sentiment, as someone said of another fictitious character. And we find so far the same thing in Mr. MacDonald's former novels of Scotch life. Margaret Elginbrod and Euphrasia Cameron, and even Bonnie Annie, in "Alec Forbes," are quite of this type. It is no wonder, then, that they never inspire anything approaching to passion in the breasts of their admirers. Passion is a real enough thing, and love-making is what novel-readers delight in ; but the intense form of these Mr. MacDonald carefully eschews ; perhaps wisely, for dramatic reasons. And failing here to draw his characters together in a bond of interest, he has recourse to the most perilous sensational expedients, which very much injure the work. But what most of all injures it is this, that Mr. MacDonald has done all he can to convert the platform of life into a theological debating-hall, he himself taking a most vigorous side. Now, such questions as Mr. MacDonald here raises, if *debated* at all, can only be logically debated ; and it is very strange it never struck him that, in consciously entering on the matter in the temper in which he has evidently done so, he has, perforce, reduced his work, so beautiful in many other respects, to a mere polemical organ.

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The Calvinistic idea does imperfectly cover some great and awful facts of life, which by means of pathetic mystery are brought very near us, in their degree, also, to touch the heart to fine issues; and the artist simply sacrifices one great element of interest when he sentimentalizes, and seeks wholly to eliminate them. Yet there are some wonderfully fine bits of work in this book—true pathos, true humour, and descriptions of nature unique in their depth and charm, what the Germans call *Zauberei*. What a pity Mr. Macdonald *will* provoke opposition by giving the reins to his theological temper, as he does. We could almost beg his pardon, looking back on what we have written, and yet we cannot in conscience retrench it.

Miss Kavanagh's strength lies in rather a different direction from Mr. Macdonald's. She has none of his absorbing charm in description, nor his intense, self-consuming interest in religious questions, and yet she usually fails where, to some extent, he fails also. She has little power in plot, and her error hitherto has been in not implicitly trusting to character for interest. She has made great efforts to *invent*, and fallen continually into inexplicable contradictions, involvements, and obscurities. This was to some extent the case with "Nathalie" and "Adèle," and it was so pronounced that it irritated careful readers of "Sybil's Second Love." It is noticeable in this new novel, "Dora," too, but it goes no further than a few troublesome improbabilities, which do not positively detract from our enjoyment of the story. And it is, in the truest sense, an enjoyable story. Miss Kavanagh's aerial delicacy of touch, her clearness and grace, and her power of showing you the heart of a character, crystal-clear, yet without the painful sense of over-mastering analysis, or bold peeping into forbidden corners, contribute to make her writing very attractive. There is a pure atmosphere that plays ever about her dainty pictures, and she never steps on doubtful ground. Occasionally, too, she lights up her pages with a vein of mild humour. Yet there is always a bewildering sense of intricacy in her arrangement, and the disposal of her characters. Dora, in this novel, is a remarkably fine study, and some of the other characters, as, for instance, John Luan and Dr. Richard, are well painted. There is now and again a transparent delicacy in Miss Kavanagh's portraiture which reminds us of nothing so much as of some old-fashioned paintings on porcelain vases. We hope "Dora" may have many readers; we, for our part, have read it with delight, and forgot we were critics in doing so, which is surely saying much. By the way, does Miss Kavanagh write verse? Some bits and turns in this novel, as in "Adèle," are idyllic.

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"You will be safe thus; I will take care of you," he whispered. "Be still, for the love of heaven."